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# THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION
## The Week-end Review

Vol. XXX. No. 770. [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1945 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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# COMPROMISE IN FRANCE

FRANCE has a Government. The Parliamentary quadrille performed by General de Gaulle and the leaderships of the three main parties has ended in a figure in which honours are evenly distributed: out of compromise a Coalition is born. Everybody wins a prize and pays a forfeit. The General secures for himself the portfolios both of Prime Minister and Minister of Defence; but he has had to abandon the intention (which he appeared unwisely to cherish) of driving the Communists into isolated opposition. The Catholic Left-Centre, M.R.P., has made goods its claim that de Gaulle must be the head of the Government, and it has retained for its nominee, M. Bidault, the key Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But it has to share with a Communist responsibility for the Army, and to accept, with such equanimity as it can muster, the presence of Communists in the Ministries of National Economy, Production and Labour. These portfolios, together with the appointment of M. Thorez as one of the four Ministers of State, represent for the Communists a reasonably substantial satisfaction of the right, which they asserted as the largest single Party, to an "equitable" proportion of Cabinet posts. Their claim to hold the portfolio for War, Foreign Affairs or the Interior, has not been met. The Socialists, to whom the Ministries of the Interior, Agriculture, Transport and Posts and Telegraphs are allotted, have scored in the sense that they have avoided having to make a definite choice, for partner, between the Communists and M.R.P. The couch on which the General must conduct his nuptials with the Assembly is, as they desired, a bed for four.

The preliminary game thus resulting in a draw ("Love All" would scarcely be an appropriate description of the score), the question is whether this Government under this Prime Minister will pull together in implementing the radical proposals of the Resistance programme, and whether the Assembly will get down to the task of framing an agreed Constitution within the seven months allotted to it. Unhappily for France, the electorate voted for radical social and economic changes and (with curious illogicality) for a leader whose instinct will be to obstruct them. Much depends on the extent to which the Parties proceed to make electioneering capital out of the past week's manœuvres. The Socialists will doubtless claim credit for preserving national unity. The Communists will be likely to retort that the Socialists were so obsessed with their rôle as mediators that they shrank from having greatness (with M. Gouin as Premier) thrust upon them; and that, in refusing to form a Socialist-Communist Government, with M.R.P. excluded, they betrayed the working-class movement. General de Gaulle's charge that the Communists are "unpatriotic" has aroused bitter feelings, and participation in the Government may not restrain the Communists from attacking it from within—particularly if M.R.P. puts the brake on the liquidation of the still considerable relics of Vichyism in the Army and the police. Between the incipient Bonapartism of the General and the political parties a marriage has been arranged; but it has not yet been consummated. The present compromise is a shade too uneasy for the health of the still barely convalescent Parliamentary democracy of France.

### The Moral of Nuremberg

The twenty men appearing in the dock at Nuremberg deserve more than any others the detestation of mankind. But for the Nazi conspiracy to conquer Europe and dominate the world, the second world war might have been prevented. They have had, of course, innumerable predecessors who deliberately planned war, from Genghis Khan to Napoleon. In the state of international anarchy in which we live, the governments of almost all Great Powers could be indicted for the same crime in a lesser degree. Governments do prepare for war at least as a contingency, and the distinction between aggression and defence to forestall aggression, or to defend what is called national honour or interests, is often difficult to make. The difference between the prisoners and their accusers is that in a world in which at least an effort was being made to end international anarchy, these men deliberately and over a period of years plotted a war of aggression. The novel nature of this trial is that it is publicly announced by the victorious Powers that to plan a war is a crime in a legal sense. That is to announce the creation of an international law which overrides sovereignty and to which all States, including the present victorious Allies, must be amenable. The corollary must be an international organisation in which America, Britain and Russia must renounce their own sovereignty and accept the obligation not to plan war. Unless this is done, the trial is a discreditable farce. The prophecy of the ingenious author of the *Trial of Mussolini* has been singularly fulfilled if, as *The Times* correspondent states, Ribbentrop has called as witnesses in his favour Lord Vansittart, Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Rothermere and Lord Kemsley. We hope they will appear in the witness box. We should like also to see among witnesses for the prosecution Dimitrov, who defended the cause of freedom in the last trial in which freedom was allowed any expression under Nazi rule. The dramatic moment in which Göring vowed vengeance on Dimitrov in the court has not been forgotten; it would be the most fitting climax to the career of Hermann Göring if Dimitrov were now to be called as a witness against him.

### Menace in the Far East

It is in the Far East that we are faced with the greatest danger of renewed international war. It is especially in Manchuria and Korea that the future of Soviet-American relations is now being determined. The Americans are transporting Chiang Kai-shek's armies to areas where they are well placed to fight the Yenan Communists, are planning a Military Mission of 4,000 men to stay in China for five years to modernise the Chinese Army, Navy and Air Force, and are running a joint Secret Service Training Class operated by Tai Li, the notorious head of the Chungking secret police. The Communist tactic seems to be one of withdrawal in the South and expansion in the North, so that, with the Soviet territories in their rear, they can avoid encirclement and make the North impregnable. Chiang Kai-shek's armies now occupy Peiping, Tientsin, Chinwangtao and Tsinan, and are reported to have taken the important strategic frontier town of Shanhaikwan; and Sino-Soviet negotiations continue about the occupation of Manchuria. So far, the Americans have not landed Chinese troops in Manchuria. North of the Great Wall the Communist armies are strengthening their positions, and are reported to have incorporated South Manchuria into their 16th Military Zone. General Wedemeyer has revealed that, though the U.S.A.A.F. is not undertaking to fly Chinese forces to Manchuria, the Chungking Government can use Chinese air crews for this purpose. The Chungking-Yenan struggle is only a facet of the rivalry between American Imperialism and Soviet Communism.

## Korean Partition

In Korea there are serious political and economic complications. In Northern Korea, controlled by the Russians, the Revolutionary Party has taken over the Government; collaborationists are in prison; and a radical policy both in industry and on the land is being inaugurated. In the American Zone there is great confusion. The U.S. Military Government makes no secret of its co-operation with Korean business interests, with collaborators and with the Japanese: and it is excluding members of the People's Party from any important posts. This is an organisation, with widespread popular support, which developed from the Korean Resistance Movement. The Government is formed from the Right-wing Democratic Party, whose main attraction in American eyes was that they could be relied on for their anti-Communist policy. The Americans are supporting the return of Kim Koo, who for many years has maintained a "Shadow Cabinet" in Chungking. His group, however, is as much out of touch with his countrymen as most emigré cliques have proved to be in Europe. The first President of the Korean Provisional Government, Dr. Syngman Rhee, has long since had the support of America, and threatens that the Koreans will fight if there is any attempt to split the country, but adds that civil war is inevitable if the United States and Russians withdraw from their respective spheres of influence. He also states that there is as complete a lack of co-operation or contact between the Northern and Southern Zones as there has been in partitioned Europe.

## King George Shows His Hand

Mr. Bevin has rightly insisted that the Greek plebiscite on the Monarchy should be deferred for some years, so that it can take place in stable conditions. King George's reaction has been to declare, in effect, that his hands are now free. Interpreting this declaration as tantamount to the withdrawal of his mandate from the Crown, Archbishop Damaskinos has resigned his Regency. In the constitutional vacuum thus created, the British Government's policy must clearly be to recognise that the Administration, based on Centre groups, which M. Sophoulis has formed, is a *de facto* Provisional Government, and to give it any necessary military support if its authority is challenged by Monarchist violence.

## Argentine Unity

For long the main obstacle to the unity of the democratic opposition in Argentina has been the refusal of the Radical Party to collaborate with other groups. It is clear that this has been the subject of a prolonged internal struggle in the party, which is by no means homogeneous. A majority faction, which retains control of the Central Committee, has decided that with the Socialists, Communists and Progressive Democrats it will jointly sponsor candidates for President and Vice-President—though it insists they must be Radicals. This means that Colonel Peron will face a serious challenge in the forthcoming elections if they are fairly conducted. He can, however, rely on the newly formed Argentine Labour Party—which will doubtless receive assistance from the police, the Army and State funds. It has a comprehensive but demagogic programme of socialisation and the elimination of foreign interests. A section of the Radical Party led by Señor Quijon and Señor Antille, both former colleagues of Peron's in the Farrell Cabinet, will also back his candidacy, whilst a third Radical group maintains the party's traditional policy of shunning electoral pacts. Peron may hope to turn these divisions in his own favour, but a great deal will depend on the way the Conservative vote is cast, the old ruling party having not yet reached a decision. The Democratic Front will not, apparently, contest the Congressional and provincial elections as a single list, and here Peron will still be able to capitalise divisions among his opponents. But the formation of a united opposition with all its faults is a great step forward; if it can secure real freedom of organisation and propaganda, it may yet unseat Peron, though it would be unwise not to anticipate a reimposition of open dictatorship or a resort to arms if Peron and his backers find the tide running too strongly against them.

## Attack by the Right

The lines on which the Tories will press their promised motion of censure against the Government will presumably be less inept than their tactics when Mr. Morrison re-stated the Cabinet's nationalisation programme. Since his provisional exclusion of iron and steel from the nationalisation list represented a contraction, rather than an expansion, of a policy already submitted to the test of an election, efforts to arraign the Government as "run-away nationalisers" were futile. This the Tory leaders have realised. Their real attack will be delivered in a sector where the Government is more vulnerable. They will argue that Nationalisation Bills are a time-wasting irrelevancy; and that the Government is failing administratively to "deliver the goods"—in the shape of houses, well-stocked shops, man-power swiftly redeployed for civilian production. With regard to demobilisation, which lies at the root of every problem of shortage and production, the Government can point to an improvement during October, when the mounting rate of weekly discharges reached 70,000. On the other hand, Class B releases of key personnel are hanging fire—with unfortunate results both in industry and in relation to the future supply of teachers. A further disquieting question is whether the slowing-down in the projected rate of demobilisation during the first six months of 1946 has to be regarded in the light of Lord Jowitt's statement, on Tuesday, that the Government was "not yet prepared to say that a strength of 2¼ millions in the Services *after* next June would be "excessive." Whether such a figure (representing, as it would do, the retention of the equivalent of nine complete year-classes under arms) is excessive or not in the eyes of the Chiefs of Staff, it would mean for this country either no houses or an austerity rivalling the leanest days of war.

## Naturalisation

The Home Secretary followed up his limited statement on permits for victims of Nazi persecution with relatives in this country by a broad pronouncement on naturalisation policy. He was faced with a difficult problem. When the lists were closed six years ago, there were many thousands of applications already filed. Since then, many aliens—in particular, enemy aliens—have given loyal war service to this country both in the Services and in civilian life, many of them after short residence on "transmigrant" papers. It would obviously be unjust if, for instance, the new application of a German Jew, who had fought as a parachutist, could only be considered at the end of the queue. But equally, the Home Office machine will fail to function, if it is flooded with tens of thousands of new applications. Mr. Ede very wisely did not attempt to state precisely how he would adjudicate between the rival claims of the pre-war applicants and the ex-service man. He was content to indicate that war-service would be taken into account, and appealed to all concerned to show restraint and give his hard-worked officials a chance. The success of this appeal was greatly enhanced by the manner and the tone of his statement, which should entirely allay the widespread fears that the Government might suddenly expel those who had come to this country on "transit" visas. It is clear that no one, who obeys the laws of the land, need fear sudden expulsion, and that the Government's naturalisation policy will be based on the sound principle that we shall accept as citizens men and women who can adapt themselves to our way of life.

## Food and the Farmer

We now have Mr. Tom William's statement of the "general principles" on which the Government's agricultural policy is to be based. For the principal farm productions—milk, eggs, cereals, potatoes, sugar beet and fat stock—there are to be assured markets and guaranteed prices, announced sufficiently far in advance to enable farmers to make their cropping plans. Efficiency in the production, marketing and distribution of home-grown food is to be encouraged by the provision of technical advice and the continuance, in a modified form, of the wartime County Agricultural Executive Committees; and, as an ultimate sanction against failure to make proper use of land, a Commission will be empowered to acquire farms compulsorily. With this announcement of intentions we have no quarrel; but it represents machinery, not a decision on the major issues of farming policy. The real question, what *quantities* of various foods are to be produced in this country, is not answered. We are told that the price-regulator will be applied "with due regard to the need for the greatest possible efficiency and economy," but, until the Government has made up its mind what proportion of the consumption of different products is to be satisfied by the British farmer, this formula is meaningless.

## Black-out in Bush House—a Correction

In our recent discussion of the "Black-out in Bush House," we referred to "the obstruction of Catholic controllers, one in the Foreign Office and two in Bush House." We now learn that no influence was exerted on the B.B.C. by the Publicity Department of the Foreign Office which Mr. Ivone Kirkpatrick was recently instructed to organise, and to whom, therefore, this passage might well have been taken to refer. Mr. Kirkpatrick, in fact, has had no connection with foreign broadcasts for many months. Indeed he was Controller of the European Service during the period when its broadcasts, including those in Spanish, were notable for their democratic spirit. We are glad to take this opportunity to correct any possible false impression on this matter and to pay our tribute to the work of Mr. Kirkpatrick in connection with wartime broadcasting. As regards the main contention, the two Spanish editors of the B.B.C. European Service are still suspended, and the best political commentaries in the Spanish and Portuguese transmissions are off the air. Nor has it been denied that this action was taken by Mr. Haley because he believed it would accord with Foreign Office policy. Rightly or wrongly, therefore, it is widely assumed in Spain and Portugal that Mr. Bevin approved the action of Mr. Haley, and that his policy towards Franco and Salazar is much more conciliatory than that of the Caretaker Government. It is surely vital that either the Foreign Secretary or the Minister of Information should make it perfectly clear to the B.B.C. what the Government's wishes are with regard to broadcasts to Spain and Portugal, and remove once and for all the impression created by these suspensions.

## PARLIAMENT : Morrisonian Menace

*Wednesday*

This has been Herbert Morrison's week. Last Thursday, when we debated the Report of the Select Committee on Procedure, he introduced the Government proposals with all his passionate grasp of parliamentary democracy. This approach flummoxed the Opposition, which had hoped to catch him out red-handed, rigging Parliament to suit his huge majority. Hard as they tried, they could find nothing wrong in principle with his proposals. After Maurice Webb had made a good maiden speech, they decided to trap the Government by a series of highly technical amendments. They nearly succeeded while the Lord President was dining. For a minute or two, the Government front bench was in disarray. But, arriving in the nick of time, Mr. Morrison showed the House that the Government was "on velvet." A masterly performance.

But the Tories are persevering people. On Monday they thought that they had got him at last, when Mr. Morrison made the Government pronouncement on nationalisation. This seemed to be a perfectly straightforward statement that Labour was going to honour its election pledges. But it made the Tory front bench and, in particular, Mr. Oliver Lyttelton so convulsively angry that they forgot the rules of procedure. In an attempt to bait Mr. Morrison they got much harder knocks than they gave, and finally laid themselves open to a resounding rebuke by Mr. Speaker. The gust of excitement blew itself out in the dreary Second Reading of the Finance Bill. By the time Hugh Dalton rose to reply, the Opposition was once again its old happy after-dinner self—the Fifth Form at St. Dominic's learning economics from the jolly new headmaster.

Mr. Churchill was back in the House on Tuesday, trying to clear up the confusion among his supporters. But he failed to discipline them. The pack was out again in full cry, scenting Morrisonian tyranny in the Emergency Laws Bill. They hoped, no doubt, to have better hunting when they saw that Mr. Morrison was not there and that this appallingly complex measure was to be introduced by Mr. Oliver. But Government supporters are learning to come to the aid of Junior Ministers instead of joining the jackals. Sidney Silverman and Dick Michison both made first-class debating speeches in defence of the Government; and the discussion maintained a very high level when Mr. Maude and Mr. Molson got down to serious criticism. This time the Government was leaving nothing to chance. Chuter Ede, exhilarated by his success last week, wound up with a devastatingly sensible defence in detail.

This whole series of debates has once again shown the mastery of the House which this Socialist Government enjoys. It may have weak patches, but man for man it is vastly more competent than the Opposition front bench. Indeed the Tories in Opposition are strangely amateur. There is plenty of skill and ability among them. But, despite Mr. Churchill, they are still an Opposition without leadership or direction. What is worse, they are an Opposition divided against itself. Chucked out of the power which they feel in their bones to be their birthright, they are as resentful of each other's mistakes as of the Government's mandate and majority. Emotionally, they just cannot accept the position of a mere minority and express their resentment by a series of unco-ordinated yaps. The addition in the last week of Mr. Assheton—who made a lamentable first appearance on the Finance Bill—and Messrs. Macmillan and Brendan Bracken, may increase the quantity of clamour, but it is doubtful whether it will improve co-ordination.

Phineas

# THE BRITISH AND THE BALKANS

A distinguished British Balkan expert relates a conversation in which Sir Nevile Henderson, then Ambassador to Belgrade, replied to criticism by saying, "I do not represent the Government; I represent the King." On another occasion the same expert found himself in the odd position of trying to persuade a British Ambassador to meet members of the Government of the country to which he was accredited. The Ambassador found this impossible, because the Balkan monarch was on the worst of terms with his Government, and it would not do to give offence to the Court by talking to representatives of the people.

These days of dynastic and feudal dictatorship in the Balkans are gone. Eastern Europe is in process of revolution; much that happens is repellant to Western people who have forgotten that it took generations of civil war to unify their own countries, and generations more to reach the conditions in which social democracy was possible. The process in eastern Europe is different, because the movement is direct from feudalism to Socialism with little experience of industrial capitalism and the Liberal democracy that was its best ideological product. The war has released popular forces in the Balkans. Since the ruling class there has for the most part collaborated with the enemy, and since the war in eastern Europe has been won by Soviet Russia and by Partisans who look to the U.S.S.R. for inspiration, the Communist Party is inevitably dominant. National sentiment and class feeling combine to support it. Economically, its policy is not Communism, but a programme of land distribution and industrial nationalisation. This unites all who wish to see their countries reconstructed and who are patriotically opposed to Fascism and collaboration. These social changes must be approved by foreign Liberals as well as Socialists, even though the process of revolution and the dominance of Communists shock them. Corruption is banished from high places, which are occupied by resolute and often fanatical men whose intolerance is at worst not greater than that of the dictators they have supplanted. The great estates of the Hungarian landlords who kept the peasantry miserably poor, and fostered Magyar chauvinism, are being broken up. Reconstruction after the devastation of war is proceeding more rapidly than we should expect in view of the shortage of trained personnel. Most important of all in the long run is the growth of the conception of federalism, which, under the leadership of Tito in Yugoslavia, is overcoming the ancient hatreds that have made hideous the history of these peasant peoples. The same drive towards the reconciliation of national groups is to be seen in the relations between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania. Here is the birth of a new society, influenced by Russia, but also intensely conscious of traditional national cultures whose right to independent development is fully recognised by Russia. Indeed, the cultural independence of national groups within the Communist federation is the subject of the principal theoretical contribution of both Stalin and Tito to Marxist doctrine.

Surely it should be the first task of a Labour Government here to welcome these social changes and to base any criticism of Communist policy on a full appreciation of the facts. To object to the absence of full parliamentary democracy when the only alternative to the present type of regime is a return to a narrow dictatorship of a small class after a further period of bloodshed and foreign intervention, is to show a disastrous lack of comprehension. The conditions of democracy, as we know it in the West, do not exist and have never existed in these countries. They have never existed in any country until the violence of internal dissension has so far abated that majorities behave with moderation to minorities and minorities confine themselves to constitutional means of opposition. We may, if we are wise, help to produce these conditions in eastern Europe, but only if we begin by realising that they do not now exist. These countries have been the victims of the eastern, not the western, war. In the West we have fought for victory; in the East, the Germans sought to annihilate the Slavs. In the West, the Germans did not often shoot prisoners; in eastern Europe, it was the common practice of both sides. New revolutionary governments will not give votes or full rights of free expression to those who collaborated with the enemy, tortured and killed their countrymen, and made clear their desire for a new foreign intervention. The nearest parallel in our own history is our long refusal to accord full civic rights to Catholics after our seventeenth-century struggle, in which Catholicism had relied on foreign support. Progress in eastern Europe cannot be tested merely by acceptance of the forms of political expression which we have evolved during the last two centuries; the future in any case depends on those who have been active in overthrowing the dictatorship of the past and have no intention of allowing its enemies to stage a counter-revolution.

If these facts are realised, we may do good in eastern Europe. If they are not, our diplomatic interventions only make us look ridiculous; their effect is to produce precisely that which we fear. As the nation which for a year stood alone against the Germans, which at length gave great assistance to the Partisan movements, and which, with the United States, is now aiding recovery and preventing starvation through U.N.R.R.A., we have great prestige in eastern Europe. The peasants of Yugoslavia heard not Moscow Radio, but the B.B.C. during the war; they even obeyed its instructions about what crops to grow and how to avoid giving economic aid to the enemy. In Yugoslavia especially, the courage and competence of British parachutists who aided the Partisans is part of the epic story of the war. We throw away these priceless assets if we adopt a nagging and uncomprehending diplomacy based solely on a fear of Communism and a balance of power policy directed against the U.S.S.R.

Much must depend on the personnel of our representatives in these areas. Some imagination has been shown in our appointment to the British Embassy at Belgrade, where men who know the country intimately and have worked with the Partisans advise an Ambassador who is prepared to take a reasonable attitude towards the regime. In Belgrade, it is the American rather than the British Embassy which earns the title of "the Embassy to the Opposition." We are aware of the difficulties. The common belief amongst ex-collaborators that Britain and America intend sooner or later to intervene in Eastern Europe, that war with Russia is only a matter of time, and that the representatives of Britain and America will necessarily support the propertied class whatever its record, means that the files of the British and American Embassies are choked with appeals from every type of quisling. Sometimes, of course, there are hard cases where the British and Americans may legitimately help if they can. Often, however, they are badgered, not always in vain, to give diplomatic or other aid to those who have no claim to our regard beyond the claim of snoboism. In Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria, the representatives of Britain are to-day, for the most part, men whose training and background have rendered them incapable of understanding the social changes happening round them. They naturally and inevitably associate with the remnants of the old aristocratic and capitalist class. To-day, British officials in these areas even discover good in men like Maniu, Petkov and the Right-wing leaders of the Hungarian Small Farmers Party. Such men were regarded before 1939 by the aristocratic and capitalist friends of Britain as dangerous radicals; now we cultivate them as the remaining hope of the old social order. It is fatal if our representatives view the passionate scene of the Balkans to-day with the eyes of the Victorian lady who remarked, as the curtain went down on the last act of *Romeo and Juliet*, "How different from the home life of our dear Queen!"

If we look at the situation squarely, we see that there are three policies open to the Western Powers in dealing with these countries under Communist influence. Unless we are prepared for a policy of active intervention in eastern Europe—which we do not believe that either the British or American Government contemplates, and which certainly the people would not tolerate—we are left with two alternatives. The first is a policy of pinpricks. We make diplomatic protests and angry speeches in criticism of elections which are at least movements in the direction of democracy. We continue to harbour war criminals and we give the appearance of fostering the ambitions of those who have shown that they are willing to make war on their countrymen on behalf of their own class. We refuse to recognise first one government and then another, only later ignominiously to climb down when we have to admit that no better alternatives exist. Thus we consistently lose credit for actions of whose performance at an earlier stage would have appeared friendly and generous.

The alternative would be openly to accept the fact that these war-devastated countries of unhappy history are now being reconstructed under Communist influence. If we then abandon the pretence that this is something unclean and transient, if we openly admit that it is a constructive as well as a ruthless force in eastern Europe (not to mention France) and that much of its social programme is commendable—then and only then we shall be in a position to discuss our common problems rationally and even to moderate its intolerance. We have in the long run no alternative except patiently and frankly to thrash out differences of interest until we have reached agreement, or to continue a policy of hostility until in all probability a third world war begins. The policy of frankness and co-operation seems preferable.

# PEACE, RUSSIA AND THE ATOM

BETWEEN them, Mr. Attlee and President Truman have evolved on paper, in ten propositions, not a plan for the control of atomic energy, but a procedure which might lead under happy conditions to the adoption of a plan. On one main issue Mr. Attlee's powers of persuasion, seconded by those of the scientists, have scored a success. The American attitude to the new weapon is less possessive than it was, and the President is seemingly prepared in principle to hand over his "trusteeship" of this discovery in all its aspects to the United Nations. But it is quite evident that he proposes to relinquish his momentary monopoly only when conditions have been met whose satisfaction will be difficult to bring about. He expects, first of all, that the disclosure of scientific, as distinct from technical secrets, should create "an atmosphere of reciprocal confidence in which political agreement and co-operation will flourish." But the sharing of the detailed, practical information, on a reciprocal basis, with others of the United Nations is to follow only when "effective, enforceable safeguards" against the military use of atomic energy have been devised. This means, in plain words, that the United States will retain in her arsenals a stock of ready-made atomic bombs, to encourage Russia to agree to safeguards which America deems necessary. Thus the conditions for creating confidence depend on its prior existence. The Commission, which the United Nations are to be invited to set up to study the question, is required, in effect, to find a way out of a vicious circle.

In fact, this olive-branch—for so Washington conceived this offer—has removed none of Moscow's suspicions. An article in *New Times* comments upon it in a tone of outspoken anger, and detects under American policy the will of "reactionary circles" and "dark forces" to make war on the Soviet Union. The background of this discussion, on which the fate of mankind is staked, could hardly be gloomier than it is. The problem before us is to transfer to the United Nations powers of control which presuppose a close, even a fraternal, trust and intimacy, when in fact their actual relationship is one of unlimited rivalry and bottomless suspicion. The notion that an easier relationship might be reached by inviting the Russians to define more precisely the limits of the zone of security they claim in eastern Europe was fortunately discarded. It was only too obvious that they would retort by asking the Americans to define their pretensions to exclusive predominance in the Pacific. They still refuse to sit on a merely advisory council for Japanese affairs and demand in that area the same rights of executive control and veto that they exercise in Germany. America, meanwhile, by arming and training the forces of Chungking is virtually extending her protectorate over the greater part of China, while the Russians rather less openly favour the Communists of Yenan in a struggle for the possession of Manchuria and Korea, as well as the northern provinces of China. The atomic bomb serves to reinforce American claims to ascendancy in a region of Asia where the Russians also are entrenched.

While this perilous rivalry divides us all the way from Trieste to Port Arthur, it is in vain that we shall attempt to solve the political problems of atomic energy on the academic lines of the Attlee-Truman plan. That plan assumed the moral reality of the United Nations Organisation. It can be nothing but a far from plausible sham while its leaders immerse themselves in a struggle for bases and zones of influence against each other.

The Washington document was interesting, none the less, because it opened up a glimpse of the World Organisation at which we shall aim, when we are truly bent on peace. It provided that the Commission which is to report to the U.N.O. on the control and utilisation of atomic energy shall lay before it proposals "for the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction," together with the safeguards, including inspection, by which evasions may be prevented. This is much more than a proposal to outlaw the atomic bomb. It is a suggestion for all-round disarmament, in which all "major weapons adaptable to mass destruction" are to be included. How many modern weapons come under this definition is not clear, but it means nothing unless it includes the bombing planes that wrecked Cologne as thoroughly as the atom wrecked Hiroshima, if more slowly. It is proposed that "national armaments" shall be deprived of such weapons, but the question is left open whether an international force shall be armed with them. It could not be such a force as the San Francisco Charter contemplates, composed of contingents drawn from national armies. It would have to be a force recruited and paid by the U.N.O. as a sovereign entity. That implies a sacrifice of sovereignty by the Greater Powers difficult to imagine in the world of to-day. But the document contemplates sacrifices as difficult as this. Effective inspection must mean that an officer of the U.N.O., who may be an American by origin, shall have the right to penetrate the secrets of Russia's defences in the Urals, while a Russian invades the remoter corners of Arizona. That is imaginable only under one condition—that the Great Powers have ceased to regard armed force as a permissible or possible instrument of policy. When they reach that conclusion, they will be ready to discard their weapons of mass destruction, and they will need neither bases in the Pacific nor zones of security in eastern Europe. The choice before us lies betweeen World Government and a prolongation of the present anarchy, out of which no constructive solution of any major problem will ever come.

# AUTO-AUSTERITY

THE daily press did not exaggerate the violence of the hostility shown last week by the Society of Motor Manufacturers to its guest, Sir Stafford Cripps. Even before Sir Stafford rose to speak, Mr. R. C. Rootes, in proposing his health, had launched a frontal attack on the Government's attitude to the industry. Sir Stafford was in equally pugnacious mood; he berated the industry for its failure to speak with one voice and for its backwardness. The result was not unexpected. The audience called their visitor's speech "Tripe" and he obviously took a poor view of his audience.

It will be a tragedy if this attitude of mutual hostility continues to colour the relations of the Government with one of our most important industries. The trouble is that the Government has made up its mind that the industry is determined to go back to its bad old ways and its safe old profits; while the industry is convinced that the Government's sole concern is to continue to extract from it ninety million pounds a year in taxation, in total disregard of its real needs. At the end of his speech, Sir Stafford appealed for an all-out effort to capture the export market comparable to that which had been put in during the war; and he pictured Sir John Black and Sir William Rootes leading their regiments into this commercial battle. Unfortunately, this is only rhetoric. During the war, the motor industry—its plant vastly expanded by M.A.P.—was integrated into a single production plan. The Government became the sole purchaser, and the firms were told by the Government what to produce. The State interfered—but constructively, with a precise plan of production; and the State purchased in bulk. To increase production, there was no need either for private initiative in design and marketing, or for the incentive of competitive profits. This was the sort of State Socialism which even motor manufacturers could understand.

But in the new drive for export markets, under Sir Stafford Cripps's present policy, none of these conditions exists. The State neither plans production nor buys and markets the products. It does not say: "Gentlemen, in this export campaign Austins will be the parent firm for the 16 h.p. National Model, Standard for the 12, Morris for the 10 and Vauxhall for the 8. The rest of the firms will become daughters to these parents. In 1945 total production will reach 100,000; in 1946, 500,000. Everything will be purchased by the State, which will market the product through a single public corporation." On the contrary, the Government says: "Gentlemen, the war is over; and, since we are not nationalising the motor industry, State control is over as far as you are concerned. Go back to private enterprise, and conquer the foreign markets. To assist you in this, we shall modify the horsepower tax to your requirements, but the new tax must raise as much money as the old. In addition to this, we shall maintain the Purchase Tax in order deliberately to kill the home market for the time being. That is the Government's contribution. The rest is up to you."

It is this combination of punitive taxation and the return to private enterprise which is causing the present sense of frustration in the industry. Had the Government maintained its wartime control of design and production, and switched over from armaments to an export drive, there might have been more complaints, but there would have been a great deal less frustration. The manufacturers have grown used to running production units in a State machine, with assured profits and no marketing problems. Now they have to reassume the risks of mass production and marketing under competitive conditions, and are simultaneously excluded from their main profitable market.

For here is the rub. Before the war the British car was exclusively designed for British conditions. It was not merely the particular character of the horsepower tax, as Sir Stafford

Cripps suggested, which retarded development. The total amount extracted from the industry in taxation on vehicles and fuel was a far more important influence on design. For it meant that a small car with a minute petrol consumption was the only car which could be sold in large numbers to the British public and therefore the only car which could be sold cheap. These small cars, moreover—without independent springing and a dozen other American improvements—were perfectly suitable for use on British roads. A British car was not required either to maintain high speeds—our old-fashioned roads made this impossible—or to stand up to bad surfaces. These factors, together with the horsepower tax, completely conditioned British car design. True, 16 per cent. of British cars were exported—in comparison with 6 per cent. of American—but this export trade was a prestige activity on which virtually no profits were made. In Britain, as in America, the home market was the profitable market and, as such, determined the design of the car sold abroad.

When the war came, therefore, the low horsepower British car was a hot-house flower, delicately adapted to the British tax climate but inferior in every other way both in quality and price to the American car. And this was due, not to any inferiority on the part of our designers or craftsmen, but to the taxes imposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the state of the British roads.

There was one other factor, apart from huge profits, which increased the price of the British car—the number of firms in the business and the number of models they produced. Whereas the vast majority of American cars were and are produced by a few gigantic corporations, there were round about twenty important British firms in 1939. Whereas each American corporation produced four models a year, our firms each produced half a dozen. Since the cost of the prototype and of tooling up for each model is round about £230,000, it is obvious that the production of say 10,000 of each model instead of 100,000 makes a vast difference to the price.

It is only against this background that we can understand the present conflict between the industry and the Government. For two years at least there will be a sellers' market overseas. Everyone can sell everything at any price. All right, says the Government. Produce all you can and export it. And to make sure that you do, we will put a punitive tax on the home market.

But what is the industry to export? During the war the American manufacturers have retained staff and raw materials for development. Their 1946 model will be a 1946 model. British manufacturers have been forbidden to do this, and many of their draughtsmen are still in the Forces. Under present conditions the first really post-war British car will be on the market in 1947—with luck. Meanwhile, we shall export 1939 models, totally unable to stand comparison either in price or quality with their American rivals. They will be very bad ambassadors indeed.

In the second place, the price of the American car exported in 1946 will be fixed in relation to a colossal and virtually untaxed home market. If they increased exports to 10 per cent. of home sales, the Americans could still give the cars away and make a profit. The price of the British car for export will be far higher, since, with the home market forbidden by the Government, profits must be made on export.

The fact is that an expanding export of cars is only possible as a derivative of an expanding home market—at least under conditions of private enterprise. The secret of success in exports is the production of a cheap, medium-powered British car which can stand up to really rough roads. But no manufacturer can plan a large-scale production of this type of car, unless he can foresee that at least 50 per cent. of his product will be absorbed by the home market. This is what the Government's fiscal policy forbids him to expect. No wonder that he is cutting back production. Profit, since he belongs to a non-socialised sector of industry, remains his incentive; and he can see no chance of profits on really large-scale production of cars suitable for export in the absence of a home market. So he stages his version of a sit-down strike.

Assuming that the Government has given a high priority to the export of cars, the choice before it is clear. If production is not to be State-controlled, then the manufacturer must be given the incentive of a home market which will absorb a sufficient number of modern medium-powered cars to enable him to reduce the price at home and abroad and yet make a profit. This would mean a reduction of car and petrol taxation and a huge programme of road construction. And this is the policy for which the industry is pressing.

The second possibility is a Government subsidy to make up to the manufacturers for their loss of profits on the home market. No one would like this, though the subsidy could be used to reduce the number of firms and of models made.

The third possibility is the Socialist solution, a return to the State control of production introduced in wartime, under which the industry's potential is planned as a single unit, and cars are produced for export as Lancasters were for combat. The State would market the product either overseas or at home, according to its requirements.

Each of these solutions has its own serious drawbacks. But at least they are solutions, whereas the present policy is at best a short-term policy, and, in the long run, no policy at all.

## YUGOSLAV DIARY

He was a typical Serbian peasant, now a lieutenant in the Yugoslav Army. He came into our railway carriage to see what the English were like. We cross-examined him. Yes, he had been brought up as a Serb and owned about ten acres. Like others, he had seen no alternative to fighting, because the Germans and the Italians and Hungarians threatened the people of Yugoslavia with destruction. How did he feel, I asked, about the Croats, with whom the Serbs have always been in bitter enmity? Well, he said, they had had their Ustashi who had committed the most horrible atrocities; but then there had also been Chetniks in Serbia and he supposed Croat people were much about the same as Serbs. Tito's federal idea made it possible for them to live together. I pushed on with this line of inquiry Bulgarians, he thought, could also join the federation when they had a better government. And the Italians? Well, they would need a lot of political education after Fascism, but he supposed the common people of Italy were also all right. Was that true of the British? He believed, he said, that the workers of Britain were honest and good men, but unfortunately, England was a centre of big business and the most dangerously reactionary Power in the world. Yes, he thought London even worse than Washington. But he stuck to it that in every country, even Croatia, the people were all right once they had good governments. That, said a friend of mine who knows the Balkans well, "is now typical of Yugoslav peasant talk. And it is the most surprising thing I heard in my life." This peasant had been "politically educated" by Communists, but he said these things, not by rote but by conviction, adding plenty of embroidery and arguments of his own. For a Serb to talk like that about Croats amounts to nothing less than a world revolution

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I had several conversations with Marshal Tito, both personal and in company with others. He is easy to talk with and has a quick sense of humour. He is a soldier, politician, and a distinguished Marxist theoretician. He smokes cigarettes in a little holder shaped like a pipe. During functions, a soldier stands not far away and comes forward to light his cigarettes. I asked him about Field-Marshal Alexander's charge that he had broken his agreement by occupying Trieste. He seemed to like Alexander, and in any case said that the issues were far too important to allow personal feelings to play a part. But it was untrue that any agreement had been broken; the only agreement had been to safeguard British communications to Austria and the port facilities of Trieste. The matter should be decided internationally, and he thought the Big Three were the best body to do it, since the United Nations as a whole included many countries which were not directly concerned. On this question of the agreement with Alexander, I made independent enquiries which satisfied me that a serious mistake was made. Unexpectedly the Yugoslavs arrived first in Trieste, and the Allied Governments decided to force the Yugoslavs to withdraw. Alexander only carried out his orders.

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One of the most interesting remarks I heard Tito make was that there was no problem of "friendship" between the Yugoslavs and the British peoples, only one of "confidence." In other words the peoples were quite ready to be friendly; if the diplomatic difficulties, the most important of which is Trieste, are cleared up, there would be little hostility to Britain. Certainly the peasants in the areas I visited with Col. Davidson, who had fought there as a partisan, obviously regarded us as friends and comrades, and everywhere I went I found profound gratitude for UNRRA supplies. Many of the stories of Yugoslav hostility to the British come, I think, from the small group of British soldiers who know only Belgrade and who have been much influenced by Chetnik girls. In some cases these girls have married British soldiers. One of them even admitted afterwards that she had only done so in order to get a passport out of the country. They tell soldiers the most preposterous stories of the Partisans, which the soldiers, who do not realise there was a civil war as well as a national war in Yugoslavia, accept at their face value.

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The first rumour that came my way from a British official on entering Yugoslavia was that the Archbishop of Croatia had been murdered. A modified version was that he had at first been threatened by O.Z.N.A. on account of his pastoral letter attacking the Tito regime, and then set upon, shot at and wounded. A Yugoslav counter-story was that the shots had been fired by a priest. In fact, nothing more serious seems to have happened than that the Archbishop had received a hostile reception by some villagers who had thrown eggs at him. That evening some of us dined with the Prime Minister of Croatia, Mr. Bacaric, a genial politician who gave me the egg-version of the affair. I told him that I thought it was my duty to complain of Yugoslavia misusing her UNRRA supplies. "Eggs," I said, "should not be used as missiles, even when the target is an Archbishop." "Ah," he said, "but it was not *powdered eggs* that the peasants threw."

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Talking of UNRRA, I want to pay tribute to a magnificent job. It was not until August that UNRRA supplies really got going in Yugoslavia, but now one sees their lorries on the roads—I believe 6,000 have arrived and there are more to come—and tractors and other agricultural machines have arrived. There are nearly twice as many lorries in Yugoslavia to-day as there were before the war. That is splendid, but still inadequate. The roads have to do most of the railway's job and, more important still, they have to take the place of about half the country's horses, removed by the Germans. A large part of Dalmatia and scores of villages in other parts of the country are utterly flattened, and in many places, the people have almost nothing to eat except what UNRRA supplies. Yet they tell me that if UNRRA continues on its present scale, no one will actually die of hunger this winter. Unfortunately there is another factor on which the life of the people depends. There is a serious shortage of petrol and lubricating oil without which, of course, the lorries are useless. And here it seems clear that political prejudice is still playing a part. The fault is not UNRRA's nor, as far as I can judge, that of the Allied Governments. Petrol and oil are allocated by British and American "agencies," through whom the two Governments act. Is policy determined, in practice, by the Governments or by the "agencies," composed (as they are) of representatives of the big oil companies? I hope somebody will investigate.

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UNRRA in Yugoslavia is the one example of an organisation in which Britain, America and Russia are actually working together in harmony as an integrated body. It is tragic that the combination of British and Americans achieved in SHAEF was not extended to include Russia. I have always thought it almost impossibly difficult to reach genuine political understanding between Russia and the West except as a result of the experience of common work. Many months passed before Washington was willing to have a Russian at the head of an UNRRA branch, but since the appointment of M. Sergeichic the experiment has worked admirably. He is a quiet, conspicuously efficient, business-like man who showed under cross-examination that he had every detail at his finger-tips and who is obviously respected by the British and American members of his staff. The truth is that if you give a man with a humane outlook and administrative capacity the job of organising transport and food for people who will starve without them, he ceases to think of himself primarily as Russian, British or American and becomes absorbed in the job of overcoming apparently insuperable difficulties. Just how great these are no one who has not travelled in Europe to-day can dimly realise. I visited villages which had been deliberately razed to the ground by the enemy, leaving peasants to come back from the woods with literally no possessions in the world except perhaps a few bed-coverings and treasured ornaments which they had hidden in holes in the ground. About fifty people were still living in one village I visited where there had once been perhaps a couple of thousand. They were all in rags and one man said that he looked forward to spending the winter indoors, since he had no clothes in which it was possible to work in the wet. Unfortunately I only had with me a spare shirt to give him. I learn one can send out clothes to Yugoslavia through the Yugoslav Emergency Committee, Bloomsbury House, W.C.1.

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Clothes are an urgent matter, but as one goes through Europe by air or rail or on the road, one realises that the most serious problem of all is the demolition of bridges. All the bridges over the Danube have been destroyed. I shall not forget arriving at Novi Sad (where there is a pontoon bridge) at nightfall in a jeep with Col. Davidson. We crossed after a considerable wait amidst an indescribable confusion of traffic. There were UNRRA lorries, many loaded with cabbages, and an occasional private car; there were peasant carts of every size and shape; some were pulled by oxen, some by the magnificent horses which one always associates with the Hungarian and Serbian Plain. There were innumerable people on foot and a few on bicycles, and when we arrived the next morning to return over the bridge, we waited two or three hours because pontoons in the centre of the bridge had had to be taken away to allow some barges to pass down the river. The great iron bridge which had been destroyed is being rapidly rebuilt; it must be completed by December; when the ice comes it will no longer be possible to lift the broken pieces of the old bridge out of the river. Later, going by train from Belgrade to Zagreb and Lubljana we crossed scores of hastily improvised bridges; in some cases they were propped up on piles of broken sleepers, torn from the tracks by the giant hooks which the Germans attached to the back of a train to destroy railway tracks. Our train had to wait for two hours before going over one of these bridges because it had to be repaired after each train passed over it.

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The surprise is that all the railways in Yugoslavia are now in some fashion again in use. On this I must quote the authority of a British official whose comments on the regime were so ludicrous that no one would believe me if I quoted them. But there was one conversation I had with him that I cannot forbear repeating. He said that Tito's regime reminded him of Mussolini's and he thought it quite impossible for us to get along with the present Yugoslavia. As he had also been an official in Italy, I asked how he and the British and Americans had managed to get along with Italian Fascism for nearly 20 years? In what did Tito's regime in Yugoslavia resemble Italy? No Blackshirts were beating up people as they went to the poll? He agreed, but cited, by way of illustration, the cries of "Tito, Tito," which, I agree, are sometimes disquietly reminiscent of the Fascist populace reciting "Duce, Duce." And then I had an idea. "Is it possible," I said, "that in Yugoslavia as in Fascist Italy the trains run to time?" He said with some enthusiasm that this was actually so, that the Yugoslavs had done, he said, a really remarkable job on the railways and the trains did run to time. But this I found after personal experience of the railway was as unreliable as some of his other generalisations about Yugoslavia.

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Having said so much about construction, I must add a word about the extraordinary joy of finding in Europe how much of the old life goes on and how much beauty remains. Belgrade was never, I think, a fine city; outside the influence of the old Austrian-Hungarian Empire one feels there the true atmosphere of the Balkans where towns are no more than overgrown villages. It is surprisingly vivacious. You can talk to discontented and angry politicians of the old regime all day long if you like, in what are still very comfortable cafes. Shops are unexpectedly full of attractive articles, including cameras and bric-à-brac of every sort which are being sold by the dispossessed ruling class. There are fine new co-operative shops where peasants with money can buy a few useful articles—baskets, china and glassware, for instance—in exchange for the food they supply to the towns. Zagreb is a much finer city and has been even less damaged than Belgrade. But it was when in the early morning I walked out into the central square of Lubljana that I first felt that uplifting of the spirit that I associate especially with the hill towns of Austria. The river runs down the centre of the town through a deep stone culvert, and the houses, of many colours, stand in a jolly, irregular pattern, with their dark brown roofs and long dormer windows. A fine baroque church has not been touched; nor have the well-proportioned eighteenth-century buildings. The hills rise sharply from the streets and from them one can see the snow peaks of the Alps. From this beauty we were taken to a little church on a hill which has been used by White Guards as a fortress and execution ground. All the horrible tale was laid bare before us; hooks on which peasants were hanged; the tree to which they were bound up for torment; the crypt fitted out as a torture chamber. The disinterred remains were laid out in their coffins for reverent reburial, the stench was unbearable, and the woods were filled with the keening of peasant women as they identified the scraps of clothing of those who had been their husbands, and sons and lovers.

CRITIC

# FILMS WITHOUT DOLLARS

THE British film industry is now facing what may be the most serious crisis in its history. In the debate initiated by Mr. Boothby in the House of Commons last Friday, both its financial and structural problems were sharply raised by a number of speakers. During the war, payments to American companies for the exhibition of their films in this country have been steadily rising: for the last nine months, dollar remittances have reached a peak in an annual rate of over £17,000,000. At a time when food imports from the U.S.A. have had to be reduced—to say nothing of newsprint and other socially important commodities—this is clearly a misdirection of our limited dollar resources. But the problem cannot be solved merely by arbitrarily raising the renters' quota of British films. So long as the output of British studios falls far short of the requirements of 4,500 cinemas, the public appetite for entertainment can be satisfied only by Hollywood.

It is therefore necessary to consider what action can be taken by the Government to ensure that more British films of acceptable quality are produced and reach the screens of the theatres. While we can make more documentaries, in which this country is pre-eminent, these short films will not fill the gap. Only feature films with adequate box-office appeal can do this. One of the main reasons for the lack of British "features"—apart from the requisitioning of studios, shortage of man-power and materials—has been the decision of Mr. Rank and his associates to produce luxury films, prodigal of time, studio space, materials, and money. We were told that *Henry V*, which was incredibly costly, was necessary to Mr. Rank's attempt to break into American markets. So far, none of his big ventures have justified this hope, nor are they likely to do so. The only period in which British films secured even moderate American distribution were the years in which the accounts of American companies were frozen in this country and the exhibition of British films offered them an opportunity to offset their blocked funds. A *Caesar and Cleopatra* is not sufficient compensation for the loss of several less extravagant—but not necessarily less attractive—features.

For the cost of Mr. Rank's venture has been virtual elimination of independent productions. Now that Ealing Studios have had to reach a distribution agreement with the Rank colossus, British National remains the only producing concern unassociated with the monopoly. The real power of the Rank combine rests upon its control of the distributing and exhibiting end of the industry; there is little permanent capital invested on the production side. Should Mr. Rank see fit, there is little to prevent him from withdrawing from production. The vacuum which would result could only be filled by the multiplication of American-financed companies making cheap films in this country to supply quota requirements, while the cinema circuits would be entirely dependent upon Hollywood for their supply of big features.

While things have not yet reached this pass, the present drift is a serious threat to the creative future of British films. The Government's task is twofold: (1) to economise dollars and afford protection for British films as a whole, and (2), within the British film industry to assist the development of independent production. The first point could be met by the introduction of an *ad valorem* tax upon film imports. The number of American films permitted to enter this country might be reduced by restricting them to the difference between the total production of "features" in this country and the minimum number of feature films required to provide a continuous flow for British screens. This suggests the need for the creation of an Import Board, on which trade representatives as well as Government nominees would sit, to select from the available American films those of the highest quality, and to confine import licences to such pictures. A similar institution, in fact, existed in France and worked well under the Popular Front Government.

The second problem—how to stimulate independent production—is more difficult. Mr. Marquand promised last Friday that Sir Stafford Cripps would shortly make a statement of Government policy, though he gave no indication how far the Board of Trade has accepted the recommendations of the Films Council Report on the growth of monopoly in the industry. This matter must be tackled at two points. At present Mr. Rank controls nearly all studio space and a large proportion of the cinemas. No independent company can be sure that its films will ever be exhibited, even if they can find studio space on which to make them. We urge, first, that the Government should retain the Pinewood Studios under national control and lease stages, fully "serviced," to independent producers. Secondly, unless it is prepared to establish by compulsory acquisition a chain of State or municipal cinemas, the Government should introduce an internal quota system. By this all distributors would be compelled to include in their programmes a proportion of the films made at Pinewood or elsewhere by independent producers.

## THIS ENGLAND

**A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Hannibal.**

**Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

Two Sikh officers whom the King had just decorated with the V.C. asked for two seats the other day in a Jermyn Street restaurant.

"We don't serve niggers," said the Italian head waiter.—*Daily Herald.*

A woman startled the crowded central lobby of the House of Commons yesterday by shouting at the top of her voice: "Mr. Bernard Shaw is God's right-hand man!"

She was ejected by police before she could elaborate her statement.—*Daily Mail.*

In view of the shortage of red tape, indents for this article will be cut by 50 per cent.—Extract from Indian Army Order No. 2020/45.

Englishman Wants English Car at English Price.—Advt. in *Manchester Evening News.*

The goat knelt when the band played the National Anthem.—*The Times.*

## I'LL SHOW YOU LONDON

I'll show you London, even on a wet November Sunday. The London that wakes up late, and revels in it. London in its best clothes, on the day that they say "Everyone is out of town"—except five million of them.

You ought to walk through St. James's Park when it is deserted, almost. They have a coffee stall on the north side of the lake, and there's one soldier at it now, and nobody will ever know what brought him here this wet day. The chairs, two by two from so many romances, are forlorn and wet. Everything drips wet. London has looked out of the window, pronounced it wet, and really dug into the Sunday papers for a change.

Even before the people come out to save their rations and eat in the restaurants, in the West End, you can hear London talking. You can get those snatches of talk that may mean so much or so little. People you pass who say ". . . must make up your mind and have no more of it. . . ." (No more of what? Mind up about what?) But before you hear the answer you have gone past them. Soldier saying delightedly: "But I was next to you!" (Next to him in what? Hospital? Foxhole? Jankers?) A woman saying: "You know what happens to me when I go to the pictures? It happens every time, I . . ." (Go to sleep? Bite the nails? Chew gum?)

And then the pubs open and the long queues of disconsolate people are swallowed indoors in wet London. The barmaids are busy all of a sudden, and twenty thousand pounds goes over the counter between noon and five past. You listen in on London and a soldier says: "Now Last Sat'day I was 'appy. . . ." Fantastic and technicoloured ideas of Arabian Nights "last Sat'days" spring to mind. The third soldier comes back to the table with three pints and they shake their heads over the price. "Only one thing for it," one says, "write letters till Thursday. . . ."

Sunday afternoon. Here truly is the opium of the people: not what Marx meant, but Bob Hope and Bacall. The queues form quite happily in the rain, and in Haymarket have taken half the road. London is becoming a musical city again, for the buskers are up and down the line with two collecting boxes for each squeeze box, thrusting beneath the faces of the American soldiers with their girls. ("NOT half a crown, Joe! Give 'im sixpence!)

Dusk on a wet Sunday, and the smoothies and the spivs come West from Maida Vale. Some in those Packards that do 200 miles a gallon on their basic. Some with their women, a little fleshy, with that heavy brass jewellery that Cleopatra's indigent sister would have worn, and which now regrettably loads down the wrists and the corsages of London women. And an acquaintance of mine, looking round, says, apropos of nothing whatsoever: "In the old days there were only two first-class shoplifters in London. My auntie was one."

And the other kind of women. Those who look at their last gasp, having run through the medical dictionary except for the mental diseases. And yet they have the constitution of a horse, for nobody weaker can stand the atmosphere of the clubs and the bars, the damp-mackintosh smell of the restaurants, the 'flu-laden gales of the tubes. What Spartans are these women of the creamy masks, who like to look as if contemplating the pall-bearers at close range.

I'll even get you a room in this London. Not from an hotel or an agency or a commissionaire of a block of flats. But you can go to make a telephone call in a certain restaurant, and the switch-board operator will fix you up, single or double, two nights or a week. Thirty-five shillings a night each, without food and it's out of town. Well, it's better than the Embankment, on a night like this.

The bosses of London, who can put M.D. for *maître d'hôtel* after their names, are choosing now whom they shall feed and who shall starve. Tact, diplomacy, and plain lying. The folks who've married into the business eat well and get their tables; the rest of London surges here and there, grateful at last when a kind Bulgar wearing last week's laundry tosses their way the old minestrone, rabbit, ice; Yugoslavian port-type or Batavian Liebfraumilch.

Lords of our life in the dusk of London, these men are worth your study. Observe the economy of gesture. Regard the way they can halt a waiter in his tracks with a click of the fingers, whereas we in supplication can only smile and lift an eyebrow for food. And wait for the final and most urgent summons of the *maître d'hôtel*, that tweeting noise with pursed lips that has every waiter to attention. (I once knew a West End type, a notorious evil-liver, who essayed a trip to the country, twenty miles out. At dawn he was astonished to hear what appeared to be a chorus of *maîtres d'hôtel* summoning waiters.)

Yes, I'll show you London, wet Sunday or not. Any day of the week, you should see the old clothes man in the top hat, holding up the traffic; and you should certainly see, in this atomic age, the luggage hoist at Fenchurch Street station, a truly remarkable relic. You should look down from the top of a bus into a West End club smoking room at three thirty in the afternoon, to see Big Business on the move. You should see the paternal way of the police with the new M.P.s at the House of Commons. You should see the Savoy page-boys in their new cloaks, very dashing and grey. You should see Desdemona dealing them off the arm in a cabbies' hash-joint off the Edgware Road. You should see the topers coming out of "The Lost Weekend," and you should see the bitter smile of a barman when he hears again THAT story of how a mink gets a baby.

But a wet Sunday night is maybe best. With the lights on the commissionaires' new uniforms, and the candles lit on the costers' fruit barrows; the whole tour personally conducted; drinks extra; no responsibility for brawls or bankruptcy.

ROLAND WILD

## TO-MORROW WILL BE DIFFERENT

SIGNOR PASCHOAL CARLOS MAGNO is a Brazilian novelist and poet, read, respected and admired in America and Europe. His play, *To-morrow Will be Different,* is being performed at the Lindsey Theatre, 81 Palace Gardens, close to Notting Hill Gate, until December 2nd by the London Theatre Group. They are acting it very well. No experienced playgoer can fail to notice the pains Mr. Basil Ashmore has taken with the production, how well the actors play together, and the care with which even minor parts have been cast. It could not have been easy to find an actress so suited for the part of "Ba," the black nanny, as Miss Eva Hudson. Mr. Esmé Percy is, as you can imagine, entirely at home in the part of a feebly grandiose, utterly dilapidated father of a family; while the heroine's part (Clare) introduced me to a young actress, Miss Hermione Hannen, who can evidently *act from within.* I was also struck by the performance of Mr. John Bryning (temperamental yet unexaggerated) who impersonated that depressingly futile yet amiable type—a youth who is only an artist because he has never grown up.

*To-morrow Will be Different* is a play about family life in Rio de Janeiro during the last years of the 1930's. It is the story of a large, once respected, family, evidently Catholic and aristocratic in origins, who have lost their traditions and positions, but are seething with an idiotic vitality: I can't say I enjoyed it.

Imagine a dramatic exposition of Chekovian futility, presented, however, without Chekovian sympathy, a group of *Cherry Orchard* characters in whom wistful fecklessness is replaced by restless inanity and emotional squalor! Well, how could anyone enjoy such a spectacle as that? I enjoyed the acting; I appreciated the dramatic draughtsmanship; I wondered how the story would end; but behind such interested responses gloom steadily collected in my mind, and all the deeper because I knew that the dramatist himself had not the smallest sympathy with my depression. Clearly, despondency was not the mood his play had aimed at creating. The theoretical optimism of its title was alone proof of that. And will to-morrow be different? I doubt it. That a daughter of the house should resolve to remove her half-caste baby from the Foundling Hospital where she had left it, and educate it at home—such a home!—was far too weak a foundation on which to base emotionally and dramatically a confidence that the baby would consequently become "a man above any distinctions of class, religion, race, a man of the new world." How anyone with an eye for human-nature (and Signor Magno possesses such an eye) can, without telling lies to himself, believe in its transformation, is beyond my comprehension; and that the public-spirited and gifted should spread extravagant expectations is an extra reason for fearing that the problems of civilisation may prove too much for men. Political hope can become like arsenic, a tonic in small quantities, a poison of the people in large. This play would have not only been more dramatically touching, but more inspiring if instead of hailing a glorious To-morrow, she had said: "One must do what one sees is right—and it may turn out happily. I brought this little creature into the world. His father was the best man I have known—better than my own people who think themselves superior. He shall have what they can give him and at any rate be brought up by one who cares what becomes of him."

That would at least have transmitted courage, and in life courage is more important and in the long run makes people happier than hope.

The scene on which the curtain rises is one of intolerable distraction and senseless shindy. Infernal gramophone jazz and children (all but one adolescents of both sexes) dashing in and out over their own excited little affairs—sex affairs, money, aspirations. One boy is dying to be a dancer, another to compose music. It is a house in which no one is by himself or herself for a moment. Papa uses the home to recuperate in between his night-club bouts of drinking and drabbing. Mamma (who at least has a kind, idiotic good-nature) snatches at every opportunity for shelving everything important to scream for domestic service. She was a glamour actress once, and the Marquis's first step downwards was, we gather, his marriage with her. She is played by Miss Pollock with considerable spirit; I do not think it is her fault, but the dramatist's, that her whimsical shifting moods are not more interesting. The climax of Papa's part is when he enters drunk and crowned as "the King of the Bohemians," and has to be carried to bed by the darkie nanny. Mr. Esmé Percy wrings the last drop out of that scene. "Ba" is the real mother in the house—or rather, boarding-house, for that is what this aristocratic home has become. She alone is the embodiment of its forgotten traditions. She is the only one, except Clare, who ever feels ashamed on behalf of the family; and when Clare can stand such a life no longer (small wonder), and runs off with a black man who is the only decent and honourable man she has ever met (he does not appear), Ba never forgives her for having piled that last enormity on top of the ruined honour of the house she has served. When Clare leaves, her musical brother, missing her support, flings himself into an affair; and (off stage) shakes the life out of the tart in question who happens to have a weak heart. He narrowly escapes the charge of murder, but the case advertises his compositions, and Clare, on her return, gives him a moral shaking; telling him that he must choose between brooding over himself as a criminal and forgetting and settling down to his music. And then she makes her speech about her baby and to-morrow. That, I think, is all there is in the play. **Desmond MacCarthy**

## THE TIPPETT SYMPHONY

Unhappily lack of space obliged us to hold over our notice of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society's first performance of Michael Tippett's *Symphony* (1945) given on Saturday, November 10th, in its own hall with its own orchestra by Malcolm Sargent. Compared with *A Child of our Time*, the piece is objective, for the composer was concerned only to write a symphony, an ordered pattern of sound. Tippett expresses the pattern in his own idiom, mainly contrapuntal, but the texture is elevated by melodic material so rich that, to the contrapuntally-minded, it will sound as full as a Bax Symphony would to the harmonically-minded. There are four movements: the first, a brilliant sonata form type with six varieties of subject, quite formal, if the ear can disentangle the subjects. The slow movement is a *passacaglia* on a massive theme, turning in on itself in quite extraordinary fashion, changing from key to key with a most moving centre variation in which three flutes weave fantastic modulations. A moment later comes the only passage we can recall for three piccolos, an unearthly sound of great beauty (though in other hands it might sound ungodly). The *scherzo* conquers immediately with its vitality in a hoqueting style. The last movement is a double fugue, never in more than three parts for all its complexity, dissolving finally into trills and ending with great bangs on the dominant. With the second *String Quartet*, the *Symphony* appears to be Tippett's finest work, that is, as good as anything being written to-day. A London performance by the L.P.O. is scheduled for next spring.

## RADIO NOTES

At the very beginning of the first programme in the new and, I should imagine, very useful series, *Bridge on the Air*, Mr. S. J. Simon took it upon himself to be arrogantly rude to a modest and sensible lady who had stated her belief in the importance of imagination in the conduct of a hand. I have often watched—and listened to—players like Mr. Simon: they always make me thankful I don't play Bridge—hard-boiled Bridge, I mean, for the family variety ("Oh! let him have it back—he didn't really mean to play that card") is no use to earnest people. As the later and less acrimonious programmes have shown, high-class Bridge, like Chess, is less a game than an intellectual exercise—a disputation between logicians; and it is best indulged in by those whose daily work does not involve strenuous ratiocination. For the latter it is too much like drudgery to be a relaxation. Nor should the spiritually proud attempt it, because defeat at Bridge is as intolerable as defeat in argument—and for the same reason; which explains those angry post-mortems we all know so well. For (and here the experts were unanimous) there is really no such thing as the "lucky" or "unlucky" player: it is a question, on the one hand, of experience, aptitude, and rapid *subconscious* reasoning, and on the other, of some kind of psychological impediment. If this Brains Trust had contained a Joad, the speakers (including Mr. Simon) would have been called to order at a very early stage and asked to define their terms. As it was, words like *realism*, *intuition*, *imagination*, were bandied to and fro like gambler's counters. What Mr. Simon prefers to call *realism*, because his is the sort of mind which can follow the whole of the course by which it proceeds, others call *intuition*, because they act on the final result of a process the steps of which are concealed from them; but the process is in fact the same, by whatever name you choose to call it. There is nothing mystical about either method, such as would transfer it into another category of mind. Broadcasts like this, however entertaining and in some ways useful, tend to be disseminators of woolly thinking, since the specialised authority with which the speakers are invested makes people uncritically ready to accept their generalisations. The subsequent programmes in this series have been all the better for getting down to brass tacks.

The re-furbished "How to Talk to Children" was a very good example of what intelligent revision at a distance can do. Of course it is more expensive than a recorded repeat, but also how much more worth while! This particular programme, in its new form, with the dead wood cut away and the whole thing tightened up, is a radio classic and ought to be re-broadcast every year. I wish I could say as much for "Window of Europe." At the risk of appearing to harp unkindly, I must suggest that the time has come to throw this type of programme overboard altogether—until television enables feature writers to turn out a new formula for dealing dramatically with factual material. All the methods current during the war years are stale beyond endurance, so that even the most distant echo of a "salute" sends our hand in search of the switch to turn it off. Invisible radio has many and great advantages, but no good comes of pretending that there is no subject or material to which it is obdurately inimical. To be merely dull is the worst of radio sins—worse even than the shrillest vulgarity.

Recommendations:—*Nov.* 25, "Hotspur" (4.30); "Time for Verse" (10.38).

*Nov.* 26.—"Book Talk" (V. S. Pritchett, 6.30 p.m.); "Hedda Gabler" (9.15).

*Nov.* 27.—Recital (3.30); Liszt (Clifford Curzon, 10.15 p.m.); "Nurse Dugdale Takes the Air" (Arthur Marshall, L.P. 10.10 p.m.).

*Nov.* 28.—"Hamlet" (from Arts Theatre, L.P. 9.30); Fun in French (L.P. 10 a.m.); Symphony Concert (Yehudi Menuhin, 7 p.m.); "Is there Anything in it?" (Witchcraft, 10 p.m.).

*Nov.* 30.—"Who is for Liberty?" (Michael Foot and Quintin Hogg, 7.30 p.m.); "Light Relief" (Praed, 11.30 p.m.).

*Dec.* 1.—Symphony Orchestra (2.10).

**Edward Sackville West**

## THE MOVIES

### "A Diary for Timothy," M.O.I. Release.

### "I Know Where I'm Going," at the Odeon.

### "Girl No. 217," at the Tatler.

Do you remember a charming if rather slight film of about three years ago called *Listen to Britain?* It took some of the sounds we were hearing every day, from explosions to a clock ticking, the concert hall to the roar of traffic outside, and embroidered them swiftly together into an impression of life in war-time. Its director was Humphrey Jennings. He returns to this method—but with more assurance of style—in *A Diary for Timothy*. Here is the same impressionism, the appeal to eye and ear by counterpoint, that won us before; but he is not content this time with gracefully skimming surfaces. A particular time (the last six months of the war), particular people (an engine-driver, a wounded pilot, a farmer, a coal-miner, a baby and its mother), particular feelings of sadness, endurance, and deferred hope pin down the play of light and sound. It is hard to give an idea of the essential unity of this film: subject matter and texture are one. Put baldly, its theme is the end of a dark age and the beginning of no one knows what; a baby, the Timothy of the title, begins to grow up knowing even less than we do of the world into which it has thrust itself. A commentary from time to time addresses the baby by name and records passing events and reflections. This may seem sentimental, which *A Diary for Timothy* isn't in the least. Perhaps I can give the feel more truly by coming down to detail. In the bitter weeks of October, 1944, with the wireless telling us the story of Arnhem and a cold fog in the streets, we drive into thicker and thicker shadows; the quiet voice of the commentary goes on; then there is a change, the mists clear, and the camera dwells on unruffled water in a clear frosty landscape—a scene of limpid beauty matched by a child's soprano; Christmas, and by then things were beginning to look up. Such moments in *A Diary for Timothy* penetrate, and all the time one is aware, delicately prodded, of the nightmare beyond the everyday scene. Mr. Jennings has exercised wonderful skill in piecing together material that, but for the imaginative grasp of the director, must have fallen hopelessly apart. During the forty minutes of its showing, it never drags or loses its thread. The commentary (unobtrusively well-spoken by Michael Redgrave) is Mr. E. M. Forster's: splendid catch by the Crown Film Unit, and, of course, he takes to the new medium like a duck to water. Let us have more of him.

Another English film, *I Know Where I'm Going*, has excellent qualities, marred a little by the awkwardness we know so well. This new venture of Powell and Pressburger is an advance on *Canterbury Tale*. No lunatic plot this time; in fact, the story is a guileless little affair, except for some hokey-pokey about a curse and the magazine ending. It has been designed to give depth to the scenery of the Scottish Isles, and this is, believe me, landscape and seascape with a vengeance. Seven days of storm, while the lady who knows where she's going changes her mind, culminate in a trip on murderous seas that is brilliantly filmed. Miss Wendy Hiller and Mr. Sam Livesey behave very nicely and naturally in the foreground, and in Capt. C. W. R. Knight, the naturalist, there is discovered a screen personality of roaring charm.

*Girl No.* 217, directed by Mikhail Romm, gives a terrifying picture of slave life in Germany during the war. Two Russian girl captives are put up for sale in the market at 15 marks, and we are shown the subsequent sufferings of one of them. Half-starved she has to work for a family of degenerates and sadists. That such households existed, even in large numbers, under Nazi influence there can be no doubt; but the insistence that all German civilians were like this seems overdone. A truer assertion about the *average* German would be that he condoned such behaviour in others.

**William Whitebait**

# Correspondence

## TWELVE BRITISH SOLDIERS ON INDIA

SIR,—The undersigned are a group of British Servicemen with Labour Party sympathies, who are fortunate in having a wide circle of Indian friends of all communities. We feel the need to present a picture of the present political situation which differs from the official propaganda of either of the major political parties.

The fact which requires to be understood most clearly is that all sections of Indians intensely desire to have a Government composed entirely of Ministers responsible only to their own people. This desire has become so strong and widespread that many of those Indians who have in the past supported the continuance of the British connection in the form of Dominion status have become disillusioned with the progress made, doubtful of our desire to relinquish power and convinced that no future collaboration is possible, unless the rapid achievement of freedom to decide their future can be guaranteed. The recent speech of the Viceroy failed to convince any section of the Indian public that the Labour Government really intends to part with effective power. It is felt that all the unsatisfactory features of the Cripps plan, e.g., the procrastination in granting independence and the practical effect of the weightage of seats in the proposed Federal Assembly to the undemocratic Indian States, will be brought forward in an interminable series of discussions with Provincial and Central Assemblies to be convened next year. The only result of those discussions will be to delay positive measures to attain independence.

The next important factor which needs to be clearly understood is that while the Congress remains the strongest and most representative single organisation, it is no longer the only organisation which represents genuine Nationalist feeling on a large scale. The Muslim League has succeeded in recent years in rallying a very large number of Mussulmans behind its programme of Pakistan.

The reason for this rise of feeling is varied. The Congress movement up to the late 'thirties undoubtedly represented the majority of Mussulmans who were nationally conscious. The Muslim feeling of insecurity, due to the slower progress of education and economic development amongst them, was however revived by some of the actions of the Congress Ministries in the Provinces during 1937–39, and above all by the refusal of Congress to form Coalition Ministries with the Muslim League. This feeling has been heightened during the war by the increase in influence of the capitalists and *banias* (money lenders), who have been able in war-time boom conditions to launch out on new lines. Only a very few Mussulmans can be described as big landlords or as big industrial capitalists. The growth of the Muslim League arises mainly out of these causes and does not represent a revival of religious or pan-Islamic sentiments. The desire of Mussulmans for a more effective safeguard of their interests is reflected in the increased support which the Muslim League has gained since the 1937 elections. This growth has taken place parallel with the consolidation of Congress influence among Hindus.

In this situation what can the Labour Party do to help Indians to achieve their cherished goal? In our opinion it is necessary first of all to establish confidence amongst Indians, where at present little exists, in the sincere desire of the Labour Party to help them to freedom. When the results of the British elections were first announced there was genuine relief that Mr. Amery and the Tories had been defeated. This feeling was dissipated by subsequent events, e.g., the appointment of a British Lt.-Col. from Persia to represent India at the Foreign Ministers Conference. The dominant feeling is now that Britons are all alike.

In order to make a clear break with the past and present, and to create the necessary psychological preconditions for any kind of Indo-British collaboration, we think that an unequivocal statement should be made by the Government that it is intended to declare the independence of India within a specific and early time-limit, and in any case within the lifetime of the present Labour Government. In the interim period all possible steps should be taken to create conditions in which the main political parties can come to an agreement on the kind of Government they want. These steps should, in our opinion, consist of the following :—

(1) The fullest possible extension of democracy by repealing D.I.R.s, restoration of popular Government in the Provinces after the forthcoming elections, together with the release of all political prisoners.

(2) The greatest possible Indianisation of the Civil Services and Defence forces should be undertaken together with a complete stoppage of European recruitment to administrative posts, Indians being given positive preference, when suitably qualified, in filling all official appointments including Political Service appointments.

(3) Governors of Provinces should be appointed from amongst Indians prominent in public life who have the respect of their fellow countrymen.

(4) Representative delegations of Labour M.P.s and of Trade Unionists should come to India as soon as possible to make the most thorough study of conditions on the spot. It is particularly important that these delegations should be present in India before and during the elections, since it is felt that their presence would act as a check on official partisanship in preparing and conducting the elections. We agree with Pandit Nehru that an all-party delegation is undesirable.

(5) The British Government and the Government of India should continuously exert all their influence and power to secure the introduction of fully representative institutions in all Indian States and to promote the absorption of smaller States into larger and more democratic units.

It is thought that these measures would lead to the best possible chance of an agreement between the main political parties. If, however, an agreement were not reached on the expiry of the interim period, it would be necessary to hand over power Provincewise and Statewise to those committees of elected representatives who would be willing to accept power. It would thus be left open to the Provinces and States to come together to form one union, to form several distinct unions, or to remain outside any union. The British Government would then be in a position to make treaties with the State or States which would arise from this series of democratic decisions on a basis of complete equality between Britain and the resulting State or States.

We know that it is hard for people in Britain to realise the strength of feeling which lies behind the demands for independence which are now being put forward by the peoples of Asia, but we are convinced that each delay makes it more difficult to achieve any kind of co-operation through the resulting frustration and bitterness of these peoples, who by their numbers are certain to become of the greatest significance in world affairs.

We appeal to members of the Labour Party to use the great opportunity which has arisen to insist on a definite solution.

A GROUP OF BRITISH SOCIALISTS IN INDIA

## PASTEURISATION

SIR,—Before compulsory pasteurisation is imposed the allegations against unpasteurised milk should be *proved.* Up till now it has been *assumed* that because the late Dr. Griffiths found the so-called "bovine" germ in 26 per cent. of the cases of tuberculous meningitis he investigated (that disease forming the

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JONATHAN CAPE

greatest part of non-pulmonary tuberculosis) then 26 per cent. of all cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis must have been caused by the " bovine " germ.

But when the compulsory pasteurisers find an increase in non-pulmonary tuberculosis in towns that pasteurise almost all the milk distributed, e.g., in London in 1941, they refuse even to consider the idea that this increase may have been due to milk.

Why, without any knowledge at all of the kind of germ found in the cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis notified each year, should it be assumed that 26 per cent. of them are " bovine " cases ?

And when the " bovine " germ is associated with the cases investigated, why is it assumed that it came from unpasteurised milk ? If Griffiths' investigations as recorded in medical journals are studied carefully, the conclusion must be drawn that in a considerable number of his cases he had no evidence that the victims had ever drunk milk, and in some of those who had had milk, he could not say whether it was pasteurised or fresh. In a record of an investigation in Scotland he admits that one of his " bovine " cases was an infant who had been breast-fed, and another was a boy of 17 who had not drunk milk except the very small quantity taken with his tea. It is extraordinary that the Committee on Cattle Diseases admitted that calculations based on Griffiths' tables " do not lead to very dependable results " and yet estimated the deaths from " bovine " tuberculosis at 2,500 a year solely on the basis of Griffiths' tables.

Lack of space prevents reference to many others of Lady Russell's arguments in favour of compulsory pasteurisation, but perhaps I might be allowed to say that they all rest on *unproved* allegations. Moreover, if milk has very occasionally spread some fever, the worst milk-borne outbreak of typhoid fever ever recorded occurred in Montreal in 1927, two years after the introduction of a by-law enforcing pasteurisation of milk.

L. LOAT,
National Anti-Vaccination League, Secretary.
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1.

## MAGYARS AND SLOVAKS

SIR,—Mr. Haire considers the number of Magyars who are being exchanged for Hungarian Slovaks as both " arithmetically inequitable and morally indefensible." May I offer a simple explanation of the disproportion ? It is due to the ruthless and efficient policy of Magyarisation. A few decades back before the denationalisation was in full swing the figures might have been equal and still further back the proportion would have been probably reversed. When I was in Csaba some twenty years ago it was still almost a purely Slovak town in the Hungarian plain, but no outward signs were allowed to betray the fact : no Slovak inscriptions nor schools. In the R.C. Church the Slovaks were already preached at in Magyar—only the tougher Protestants still clung to their Czech Bibles, hymn books and sermons. The same applies to the once large Slovak minorities in Budapest and its outskirts and in other places south of the Slovak frontier. On the other hand, in Czechoslovakia the Magyars enjoyed all minority rights, including schools of all categories except a university, instead of which, however, they had an Academy liberally endowed by President Masaryk himself. As for their present treatment, we must not forget what the Magyars did in those Slovak districts which were adjudged to them by Hitler and Mussolini in their Vienna decree. May I add that I hold no brief for the Slovaks ; in fact, I was myself expelled from Bratislava after Munich by Slovak Fascists. But again in fairness it should be stated that their leaders were Magyars like Tuka (he only learned Slovak after coming from Budapest in the Twenties) or Magyarone priests like Tiso, who had been educated in Magyar seminars. Call it Nemesis if you like, but, like the Germans of Bohemia (miscalled " Sudeten " by Goebbels' propaganda), they are only reaping what they have sown.

Caroline University, O. VOCADLO
Prague.

## TRAINING TEACHERS

SIR,—The Government have asked for large numbers of recruits under the above scheme and Service men are invited to forward applications before release, quoting their release group number. This is, presumably, so that, if rejected, they will have some time to make alternative arrangements for civilian employment.

The scheme will lose many potential recruits if the experience of applicants on this unit is any criterion. Many instances can be quoted, but two will suffice :—

(*a*) Officer, release group 26, due demobilisation by 31.12.45. Application (Form 203 RE) sent to Ministry, S.W.1. on 19.9.45. Formal unsigned acknowledgment received from Gloucester 24.9.45. Letter sent to Ministry 8.11.45, requesting action. No reply received.

(*b*) Officer, release group 26, due demobilisation by 31.12.45. Interview granted 29.10.45. No news of acceptance or rejection.

These two cases are typical of the awkward situation in which Service applicants with release groups approximately 24–28 find themselves.

It is understood that if accepted, there may be some delay before commencing training. Applicants are therefore faced with three awkward choices :

(1) They can assume that their applications will be accepted and sign on for six months' extended service to cover the pre-training delay mentioned. This would be in the interest both of the Service and themselves.

(2) They can accept release and find temporary employment in the belief that their applications will be successful.

(3) They can make alternative arrangements for permanent employment and abandon their hopes of acceptance entirely.

It can be seen that the situation is hardly likely to encourage future applicants and the present ones are indeed " between the devil and the deep blue sea."

DOUGLAS T. EDMED

## BRITAIN'S FORESTS

SIR,—Mr. H. H. Symonds contests the statement that forests give employment " up to 40 men per thousand acres " by citing the very low figures returned by an eleven-years-old forest. No forest of that age could give so much employment ; it is only when a forest is fully established and mature timber is being felled, converted and " utilised " that the maximum employment is achieved. But before trees can become mature they have, oddly enough, to pass through stages of immaturity, during which they will give less employment and will also be less attractive to look upon.

On the subjects of beauty and Sitka spruce there can only be agreement to differ. Beauty is proverbially in the eye of the beholder. Many people think Sitka spruce are beautiful and some who have seen the mature trees in the Far West have used the word " magnificent." Mr. Symonds's views have been clearly stated elsewhere with such terms as " stark rows of Christmas trees " and the " impudent symmetry of the young spruce, the formalism of the mature spruce." Incidentally, if every individual dissentient to any projected afforestation scheme carried the power of veto, no forests could be established anywhere—and an extension of the same principle would mean no new buildings, no new cars, and even no new people.

THE WRITER OF THE ARTICLE

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# BOOKS IN GENERAL

The last six years have made many changes in the French literary scene: Valéry, Romain Rolland, Max Jacob and Giraudoux have died; new writers like Camus and Vercors have risen; Eluard and Aragon have been inspired to write poetry that is direct and easy to enjoy. But the most conspicuous new feature, I think, is the emergence of Jean-Paul Sartre. Through *Le Mur* and *La Nausée* his gifts were already before the war known to connoisseurs; now he towers as the leader of an influential school. He has put forward his "existentialist" philosophy in a forbidding tome entitled *L'être et le néant;* he has had two plays acted and published, *Huis clos* and *Les mouches;* the first two volumes of a three-volume novel called *Les chemins de la liberté* appeared a month or so ago; and now arrives the first number of *Les temps modernes,* a monthly magazine that he edits and that makes a bid for the primacy long enjoyed by the *Nouvelle revue française* which has, alas, been extinguished. It includes on its editorial board Paulhan, the editor of the late lamented *N.R.F.* and Raymond Aron, whom we in England already know well by his admirable work on *La France libre*: the first number attains the high intellectual standard that one would expect, yet includes nothing of more than topical interest. In his statement of policy Sartre insists, as I think alarmingly, upon the necessity of literature being "engagée," that is, I take it, "taking sides" and seeking, immediately and explicitly, to alter men's behaviour. Some of the greatest writers have succeeded in this—Bossuet, Swift, Voltaire, Richardson, Rousseau, Dickens, Victor Hugo. Others have usually abstained—Shakespeare, Racine, Sterne, Miss Austen, Keats, Flaubert. To impose such an "engagement" seems to me as foolish as to forbid it. Everyone ought, as Mr. Priestley puts it, "to have his fellows on his conscience"—this is literally the Gospel truth. But it does not follow that all writers ought—or indeed are able—to preach. Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, even Tolstoy, should have avoided the pulpit. You may succeed in silencing a Baudelaire and a Henry James, but you will never turn either into a Harriet Beecher Stowe. Sartre declares that he holds Flaubert responsible for the bloodthirsty repression of the Commune, because he did not write a line to prevent it. Was he responsible also for the excesses committed by the Commune because he did not write a line to prevent them? If novelists and poets have to write protests against every political crime, they will have precious little time for writing anything else. Shakespeare was the least "engaged" writer there has ever been—and luckily; for in his time there was enough official wickedness to prevent him ever writing anything but protests. And to-day, if anything, it is worse. For in most European countries it is now assumed that minorities have no rights.

But I want to discuss Sartre as a writer rather than as an editor. Since French books are still rarities in London, we must be very grateful to *Horizon* for publishing here in French a sample of Sartre's art*. He has become a writer of European stature, about whom every professional critic must form his opinion. For my part I am certain that he has outstanding talents; and it is just for this reason that I wish to explain why I consider him so dangerous.

I saw *Huis clos* in Paris, where it enjoyed an immense success. It is a one-act play with the scene laid in Hell. Hell turns out to be a sitting-room in the Second Empire style furnished only with three settees and a heavy, clumsy bronze. The electric light is unshaded; the door is locked; and when the curtains are drawn back, the window is found to be bricked up. Thus the audience is skilfully infected with claustrophobia; and when the play was first produced, just before the liberation of Paris, every spectator must have thought of similar rooms in each quarter of Paris where his friends were being tortured by the Gestapo. But in the play there are no torturers any more than there are flames or capering devils. The conception of Hell has been improved since the days of Bosch. The sinners are left to themselves, and inflict eternal punishment upon each other through the emotional relationship they at once establish.

The man, Garcin, is a pacifist who has been shot for attempting to desert. He is visited by the everlasting doubt whether he did not act from cowardice rather than from principle, and his two companions in Hell only exacerbate his anguish. He looks for reassurance to Estelle, who is in Hell for having murdered her baby, but she desires him, and so her attempts to comfort him are unmistakably based only on the desire to please. The third personage is Inès, a Lesbian, who has separated a woman from her husband and by cruelty driven her to suicide. She torments Estelle with her desire, and Garcin with her jealous hatred. Each of the three is obliged by character—which is destiny—to make the two others suffer—an economical system for the Devil, who thus needs no employees save his victims: "L'enfer, c'est les Autres."

The situation is as neat as in the most professionally well-made play by a Sardou. More important by far, the work is imaginative, a symbol of the suffering that human beings often, without wishing it, inflict upon one another. As an assault upon the emotions it is efficient, but the final effect—so at least I felt—is merely to depress. Though immensely more distinguished than any Grand Guignol play, it comes no nearer to true tragedy. It is a prodigiously accomplished but arid comment upon one aspect of the human condition. I greatly prefer *Les Mouches*, a version of the Orestes legend, which Sartre has made topical without destroying its poetry.

When we come to *Les chemins de la liberté*, we find what is essentially a series of variations on the same theme as *Huis clos* continuing through over six hundred pages. One is never bored—Sartre is such a master of narrative. The first volume, *L'âge de raison*, is set before Munich; the second, *Le sursis*, during the three days of the crisis. All the characters are occupied with inflicting reciprocal unhappiness. They are interested in little except sex, for which they are curiously untalented. One young man lives with a woman addicted to drugs and twice his age; another is initiated into sex by a mulatto whom he finds repulsive; a third, who is paralysed, is regularly masturbated by his nurse; a girl gives her virginity to an old man she finds repulsive—and for no better reason than that she feels she must get rid of it somehow; a schoolmaster lives with a woman he does not love and seeks frantically to find money enough for an abortion which she does not desire; a homosexual man is obsessed with the wish to castrate himself with a razor. In the second volume these pleasing situations are relieved by glimpses of a Czech family following the Munich negotiations in growing despair and danger, and by incursions into the thoughts of Neville Chamberlain, Daladier and Sir Horace Wilson. Sartre uses a technique of "simultaneity" which he has developed, he says, from the practice of Virginia Woolf and Dos Passos. The development consists in dissolving one scene into another with no break whatsoever, like a flash in a film.

Let me give an instance. In the following quotation, the action moves from Paris to Munich and back to Paris, with no indication that the scene and the characters are thus twice changed.

> Si vous m'aimez, dit elle, écartez-vous, j'ai trop chaud. C'est là, dit sir Horace Wilson en s'effaçant. Il ne s'écartait pas, d'une main il arracha les couvertures, de l'autre il lui tenait fermement l'épaule, il était couché sur elle à present, il lui pétrissait les épaules et les bras de ces mains violentes, de ces mains de proie. . . .

The effect, as you can see, is a trifle confusing, though sometimes it can be ironically telling. I doubt whether it is more than a trick that displays Sartre's astonishing ingenuity.

Before commenting further on this novel, I must confess that I have not read *L'être et le néant* and that despite Mr. Ayer's exposition in *Horizon,* I don't pretend to understand Existentialism. I gather that this philosophy was developed in Germany, during the despair consequent upon the defeat of 1918, by Heidegger and others, under the influence of Kierkegaard. Apart from Sartre, Camus is the most prominent French Existentialist. I have read his novel, *L'étranger*, the study of a man condemned to death for a murder committed, shall I say by chance or by nonchalance? It presents man as drifting through life without volition. The book is very slick, and shows the influence of Faulkner and other American novelists. On the other hand, Camus's leading articles in *Combat* have been often magnificent, and like Sartre he distinguished himself by his energy and courage in the Resistance. It is odd that the actions of these professional pessimists proved the reality of their hopes, whereas Montherlant, with all his cult of the heroic virtues, showed himself merely flabby, mesmerised apparently by the fascinating forcefulness of the German soldiery.

In Sartre also the chief influence of the Existentialist philosophy seems to be an emphasis upon the impotence or non-existence of the will. There is much talk about whether man is more free when he follows what he takes to be his nature, or when he breaks away from it. The determinist doctrines of Freud and Marx are partly responsible; also, I suspect, Dr. Watson's Behaviourism, and for all I know Pavlov as well. Of course, determinism does not entail any such sense of lacking volition: the contesting elements within ourselves are too important a part of the forces that we obey. In the third volume of *Les chemins de la liberté* some of the characters, I presume, will discover happiness and "liberty" in devotion to the Resistance. In the meanwhile, I must complain that they are absurdly unrepresentative.

To condemn a novel or a play for giving a distorted view of life may be merely foolish. Evidently in *Macbeth* and *Phèdre*, in *Le père Goriot* and *Wuthering Heights* and *Le rouge et le noir*, we are presented with exceptional situations and characters, such as do not represent the experience of one reader in a million, though they may reflect our unacted desires. A writer is eminently entitled to project a world of his own imagining. But Sartre's novel, with its vast canvas, pretends—unless I am mistaken—to offer a picture of pre-war France, or at least of that section which can roughly be called intellectual or artistic. And great as was the degradation of many individuals in France (and for that matter in England and everywhere else), the picture he presents seems to me utterly unplausible. Only one of the characters seems ever to read a book; on the only occasion that pictures are mentioned, the comments made by the characters are puerile; nobody ever listens to any music except dance music, nobody ever enjoys architecture or landscape or even, so far as I remember, food. Only the most determined emotional prejudice can accept this view as anything but neurotic and untrue. Men and women were painting beautiful pictures, writing admirable books and music, talking delightedly about all of these, finding happiness in love-affairs, in bringing up their families—"le ciel, c'est les Autres"—in fishing, in climbing mountains, in swimming and bicycling and playing bowls, in a thousand forms of work and recreation. In his novel, as in his play, Sartre presents life as Hell, from which all enjoyment is irretrievably banished. And this is why I consider his influence calamitous.

I am painfully aware that the arguments I have been using may seem similar to those with which Zola was once so stupidly attacked. But my point is by no means the same. Zola, living in a society that pursued pleasure recklessly, assumed that there was lots of pleasure in the world, and deplored only such forms of it as were obtained at the expense of other people. Sartre's view is different; so is the public to which he speaks,

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* *Huis clos. Horizon.* 12s. 6d.

During six years it has been essential for us all to practise Stoicism: and it is no accident that this odious creed which disparages enjoyment also proscribes pity. Because we have had no energy to spare for pleasure, we have come to think—or at least to feel—that pleasure is intrinsically wrong. This, I suggest, is a negation of morality. The utilitarian criterion of pleasure remains the most reasonable and practical test of right and wrong. To recover our morality we must detach the sense of guilt from the notion of pleasure. I am not suggesting a return to the facile philosophy of Anatole France. To exclude the tragic elements in the human condition is both a self-deception and an affront to such dignity as man can attain. But even Anatole France strikes me as far wiser and more moral than the Existentialists. Although there is an appalling amount of preventible misery in the world, I do not believe that most human beings are, on balance, either contemptible or unhappy. The pessimism of Sartre (and of Céline) is no better founded than the optimism of Pangloss. His books reflect the responses of an abnormal man to an abnormal situation. Pascal's sickness was at least controlled by a belief in Heaven. Such monstrous books as Sartre's enjoy a sensational success because of the unimaginable sufferings of the French—I doubt whether anyone who has not yet been back to the Continent can begin to understand what misery the German occupation entailed. But history shows that, though men are habitually made wicked by the possession of power, peace has been far more common than war. To judge the human condition by the experience of recent years, however natural, is none the less a folly.

Any outbreak of cheerfulness has, ever since the Romantic Movement, been condemned as vulgar. It is now simultaneously attacked as displaying a bourgeois indifference to the sufferings of the poor. Yet there is a lot of enjoyment in the world. (And not only among the rich: is not the local far gayer than the Ritz?) But there ought to be more enjoyment than there is. We need therefore to rehabilitate the notion of enjoyment. Writers who seek to disparage it should be discredited: they talk like La Fontaine's fox:—"Que nous-sert cette queue? Il faut qu'on se la coupe." So let us not be cowed. Let us be content to be vulgar, with Horace, Shakespeare, Voltaire and Goethe.

Raymond Mortimer

## GREEK HISTORY AND HISTORIANS

**Paideia, the Ideals of Greek Culture.** By Werner Jaeger. *Blackwell.* 22*s.* 6*d.*

This, the third volume of Dr. Jaeger's monumental work on Greek Culture, deals with the fourth century B.C. While Volume II described the birth and development in the work of Socrates and the early Plato of that philosophy which Dr. Jaeger interprets as a search for "the divine centre," the present volume traces what has ceased to be a continuous line of development and has become a conflict of tendencies. This conflict at the level of thought is between the development of systems from first principles and the construction of empirical generalisations upon the basis of "practical experience and common sense"; at the level of politics it is a conflict between the City State ideal, steadfastly maintained in circumstances which were increasingly unpropitious and the effort to transcend it in the interests of Pan-Hellenic unity.

A considerable portion of the volume is devoted to an analysis of Plato's later dialogues, the *Phædrus* of which Dr. Jaeger has some novel interpretations to offer, and *The Laws* which he treats as a prophetic work foreshadowing the tragic finale of the City State's collapse. There is also an account of Plato's excursus into practical politics as the tutor of the young Dionysius II described in the Seventh Letter. Other chapters deal with Greek medicine, the conflict between freedom and authority and the relation of rhetoric to politics and to philosophy. The work is authoritative and will no doubt in time rank as a classic.

Reading it one is struck by two things: first, the frequency with which history repeats itself. The remark, I know, is platitudinous and Greek history, one has always been taught, is in a special sense the prototype of our own. The world of Ancient Greece is like a pair of inverted field glasses through which to view our world; you see everything in miniature, clear, sharp and small.

All this is familiar enough, and yet when one comes to the actual reading of Greek history, one cannot avoid a sense of staleness, the staleness of the over-familiar—the allies of war falling apart after victory, because there is "no inward bond of union to hold them together"; one ally, Athens, presently joining with the ex-enemy, Sparta, against Thebes in order to rectify the "balance of power"; financial stringency plus ambition compelling "Athens to resume her old imperialistic policy of force against her allies"; Demosthenes denouncing the would-be appeasers of Philip, by-passing them and "appealing directly to the people"; politicians habitually saying what the "public wanted to hear, anyhow"; even the connection between law and politics which made pleading and prosecuting in the courts the normal mode of entry into political life—with what punctual and melancholy familiarity all this strikes the mind of a reader surfeited with the politics of our times. Is it, one wonders, that human nature is eternally the same, or only human political nature, or only Ancient Greek and modern European political nature?

Secondly, how accurately do the judgments of historians reflect the conventional prejudices of their times? (But is it perhaps only Dr. Jaeger's judgment that is a mirror, or that of all historians short of the very greatest?—for safety's sake, I confine these observations to Dr. Jaeger, noting nevertheless how familiar to the reader of histories his judgments seem.)

Here, for example, is Isocrates, trying desperately to induce his countrymen to transcend the Greek City State and to rise to a conception at once less parochial and quarrelsome, Isocrates, in fact, inspired by the Pan-Hellenic ideal. And a very noble ideal, too, based as it was not merely upon racial unity but on intellectual affinity. As Dr. Jaeger well says, "it was the spiritual achievement of Athens which brought it about that Greece henceforward meant, not a race, but a stage, the brightest stage, of the intellect," and he quotes Isocrates to the effect that "the man who shares our *paideia* is a Greek in a higher sense than he who only shares our blood." If, in other words, nationalism there must be, the intellectual is better surely than the racial variety; at any rate it does not lend itself so easily to the game of power politics, so that when a crisis comes we find Isocrates, who seems to have held all the right views, advising Athens to abandon her imperialist policy on the ground that it is better to gather laurels in peace than to expose the State to universal enmity by greedy land-snatching.

Demosthenes, on the contrary, seems to have been a diehard of the old school, clinging desperately to the ideal of the City State, doggedly maintaining an outmoded form of private and national life, crying out for more armaments and striving in the face of the overwhelming force of Philip, to "exalt Athens once more to great power and prestige." What a tiresomely wrong-headed man, one thinks, how blatantly and foolishly patriotic, how blind to the signs of the times; responsible for what misery and suffering to his people. And yet Dr. Jaeger praises and supports him, castigating the Greek school of historians who have belittled him *vis-à-vis* his opponents, Aeschines and Isocrates and talks about his "profound historical sense of the destiny of Athens and himself and his profound determination to meet it." I never knew what this sort of talk meant when Mussolini indulged in it, and I don't know what it means now. Demosthenes led Athens to the "destiny" of disastrous defeat, after which the city lost her power. A wiser man would have realised the facts of the situation and relinquished the power without the defeat. But Dr. Jaeger's book is full of revealing little phrases as, for example, "thereafter the two rival states were led by less competent men. Their power quickly diminished. The conflict between them quieted down," which suggests that the more competent the statesmen, the more numerous the wars which the State "enjoys." And that, I suppose, is precisely what, given his scale of values, Dr. Jaeger in common with most historians does think, believing that the measure of a statesman's competence is to be found in the degree of his country's "greatness," "greatness" being measured by the number and successful outcome of the wars into which the country is led by the "great" statesman.

C. E. M. Joad

## NEW NOVELS AND STORIES

**Equinox.** By Allan Seager. *Heinemann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

**Cannery Row.** By John Steinbeck. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

**Worlds Beginning.** By Robert Ardsey. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

**The Leaning Tower.** By Katherine Anne Porter. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Most English novel reviewers must have reached the point where it is a real and immediate relief to discover American books among their quota. Whether the best American novels are better than their best English contemporaries, I don't know. Alas, in this capacity it will seldom concern me. But what is certain is that the average monthly novel is likely to be livelier and more thoughtful if it is American.

The centre of the American novel has shifted considerably since the heyday of Faulkner, Hemingway and Dos Passos. The dominant school is no longer either tough or sociological. Miss Mary McCarthy, Mr. Charles Jackson and, on the extreme fantastic wing, Miss Carson McCullers are the exponents of something altogether different. The mass, whether social or regional, has receded from the foreground, to be superseded by a larger-than-life-sized individual. This individual is placed firmly on the operating table, under the arc lights: he is dissected and then photographed from every angle. The dangers of this severely intellectual treatment are obvious enough. Psycho-analytical theories are dogmatic, self-assured and, most dangerous of all, lodged in a carapace of most unliterary jargon. This was inevitable, since new terms had to be invented to cover the new discoveries; but the difficulties of reducing such a theory to art are as grave as the need to attempt it is urgent.

Mr. Seager is squarely planted in the centre of this new school. He writes with great energy, though without grace. He is clever, thorough, but often, alas, obtuse. His faults are clamorous and must be dealt with first, but they won't, I hope, conceal his very real virtues. In view of his abundant intelligence it is nothing less than bewildering to find one long, irrelevant and wearisome passage after another, crying aloud for the blessed oblivion of a blue pencil.

> As Verplank sat listening, he decided that nothing could be learned about the war by a single observer. War was a mass phenomenon. There were too many individuals in a nation at war to come within the scope of one man. Then, too, in any mass action was there a pitch of emotion? Perhaps; anyhow a moment of psychic tension when the individual reaction ceased to have definition as such, and began to lose itself in the action of the mass as a whole.

There are constant examples of such innane and long-winded asides. The casual introduction of a barman is enough. Six pages of the barman's quite irrelevant past history are too much. This may be some relic of the sociological tradition, but it entirely fails to give the reality which is so strenuously sought.

A disillusioned journalist called Richard Miles returns from Europe in 1940, bored and horrified by the confusion of an embattled continent, yet uneasily aware that New York will have little to offer him. Indeed he finds no savour either in he bed of his mistress or in the conversation of is friends, and it is principally to escape from hese that he decides to readopt his seventeen-year-old (and now motherless) daughter. Father nd daughter had been separated for ten years, nd their relationship was bound, at least in a novel of this school, to be turbulent. Here the urbulence is assiduously encouraged by the maleficent amateur psychologist, Henry Verplank. He has already conducted a drunken poet to his destruction, only for the pleasure of observing, nd learning from, the victim's contortions. He ttempts the same operation on Mary Miles, nd the book ends in his complete success.

Miles and his daughter are lifeless enough, mere devices for the introduction of Verplank, nd it is he who gives the book its thorough and triumphant justification. It is not that he is a credible character, or meant to be. He personifies he oldest and deepest of all evils, a ruthless and unscrupulous pursuit of knowledge. We are to nderstand that Verplank is quite single-minded n his researches, and had Mr. Seager allowed im a little more of our incidental sympathy (it as a mistake, I think, to make him so intransigently repulsive) then this villain might ave aspired to the stature of a lesser Faust or Adam. The essence of positive evil, so Mr. Seager, so Goethe, so Genesis would have us now, is elephantiasis in a virtue. I believe that Roman Catholic theologians have defined heresy n something the same terms, as the exaggeration f a truth.

All this is exceedingly well done, and Verplank difficult to forget. If there is a fault here, it that Mr. Seager tends to lay on his effects ather too thickly. A chapter of drunken horror a bar ends thus: "No," the policeman said, nd wiped the lip of the bottle with the palm f his hand. The next chapter opens: "Henry Verplank dipped into the bowl of caviare with knife, loosened a clump of the rich, greenish pheres, and spread them painstakingly on a ound cracker." "Ah, contrast!" we exclaim, nd thereby condemn the transition as altogether o crude and too "writerly." But this is a fault hich so intelligent a novelist will soon correct.

A final comment occurs to me on this psychoanalytical genre. So far as I know no novelist as yet dared to present a sympathetic analyst Mr. Balchin's was meant to be, no doubt, but did not find him so); Koestler's blonde lady was a monster, and Miss McCarthy's little man was a figure of fun. I take this to be due either to the scapegoat hatred which these writer-patients have indulged towards their analysts, or, more simply, to fear of too naïve and overt an enthusiasm for the new faith.

I never read *Tortilla Flat*, though I found Spencer Tracey charming in the film. *Cannery Row* is of the same order, discovering Mr. Steinbeck as a gentle and whimsical humorist rather than as a genius of truth and drama. One might dismiss it as the film script, which it will certainly become, if it were not that Steinbeck often displays a certain command of words. I find his lovable rascals both tiresome and improbable, though their adventures are sometimes very funny indeed. In his style I am conscious at times of a rather childish wish to surprise. "Only one brave and beautiful boy of ten . . . ever crossed the old Chinaman," and later in the same chapter, "The toilet leaked for five years until a clever and handsome guest fixed it with a piece of chewing gum." In fact the beauty of the boy, the handsomeness of the guest are entirely irrelevant, and, for some reason, are obviously meant to be. Here is a lyrical passage:

> The sea is very clear and the bottom becomes fantastic with hurrying, fighting, feeding, breeding animals. Crabs rush from frond to frond of the waving algæ. Starfish squat over mussels and limpets, attach their million little suckers and then slowly lift with incredible power until the prey is broken from the rock. . . . Orange and speckled and fluted nudibranchs slide gracefully over the rocks, their skirts waving like the dresses of Spanish dancers. . . . The snapping shrimps with their trigger claws pop loudly. The lovely coloured world is glassed over.

At first sight it is effective. But careful reading shows, first, a number of illegitimate emotive words ("fantastic," "incredible," "lovely"); then a complete failure to use *any* word which is instantaneously evocative. The one simile is unimaginative and conventional; contributes nothing to our vision. Contrast this passage with any of the marine ecstasies in *The Unquiet Grave*, and the difference between art and clever verbiage becomes very clear indeed.

The author of *Thunder Rock*, enamoured of playing tricks with time, now projects us into America's immediate future.. *Worlds Beginning* is a clever but silly book. While the play had a moral to purvey at least as interesting as Barrie's in *Dear Brutus*, the novel is little more than a plea for political good sense. Mr. Ardsey is optimistic: he foresees a gloomy and vicious period of internal dissension, but peace after that, common sense and decency. There's little to be said about it all. His wish is sympathetic, and readers may share his hope of its fulfilment. Yet the evidence is against it and . . .

But why should one discuss a novel in these terms! It's a poor novel by a wise and intelligent man. There's nothing more of interest to be written.

Miss Katherine Anne Porter is different from these compatriots of hers in a very simple but intangible respect. She is an artist. Her conception of writing is the same as Chehov's or Edith Wharton's, that of Turgenev or Henry James. Her execution is less assured, but she shares with these masters the knowledge of what art is and what it isn't. Most of these stories are quiet and even sedate. The worst of them are a little bit dull. I do not find her an exciting writer, even at her most lively, but a proper conception of art is not necessarily an exciting attitude. How good it is, how good, how good, how . . . heigh-ho! Reading Miss Porter I sometimes hungered for the deliberate grossness of Joyce, the enormities of Dada. Reading Mr. Seager I thought a little wistfully of Arthur Waley.

PHILIP TOYNBEE

## THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

**Prospero's Cell.** By LAWRENCE DURRELL. *Faber.* 10s. 6d.

An island, any island. Voluntary imprisonment. You have broken loose and now (these are the terms) there is to be no breaking loose. Water laps round; it must encircle *completely*—no causeways at high tide—but the little steamer may come and go as often as it likes. Noting the islanders and the landscape, receiving visitors, developing your exile. Cult of timelessness. Epicureanism. Happy or bored? After a while you hardly distinguish. Then one morning the bags are packed and you leave, never to return.

It may be a day on Lundy Island, or a life sentence on Tristan da Cunha; the spell-binding, the rules of play are the same. Mr. Lawrence Durrell chose an especially captivating island, Corfu, and his stay, one gathers, was prolonged. He could and did for several years live outside a world that was preparing to burst into flames. The year recorded in his island journal is 1937–38, but the date doesn't signify, and any reference to larger events would be, we are made to feel, an

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anachronism. In rewriting these impressions he does let slip, before the final chapter, one or two words that stray beyond the charmed circle. Someone's face reminds him of F.-M. Montgomery—what a jog that gives us! It is an anachronism in the common sense, too, for in 1938 Montgomery's features were known to very few.

Mr. Durrell's programme for those years, when we all caught at paradises and stuffed back nightmares, was a mode of what he calls "narrow loving." He would, being a poet (and a notable one) create his own timeless existence before time stepped in. The artifice attaching to this mode must be accepted by the reader, and one of the book's puzzles is that one never quite seizes the author's intention, never knows, for example, whether he is letting himself go in his fashion or casing everything in unbreakable glass. Greece offers you, he says on the first page, the discovery of yourself. We expect, then, since the narrative takes the form of a diary, to discover Mr. Durrell, and we may be disappointed. A style, a landscape, a situation—yes, these materialise unmistakably.

> . . . for the summers of indolence and deduction on the northern beaches of our island—beaches incessantly washed and sponged by the green Ionian—taught us that Greece was not a country but a living eye. "The Enormous Eye" Zarian used to call it. Walking in those valleys you knew with complete certainty that the traveller in this land could not record. The sensation of this immense hairless recording eye was everywhere; in the ringing blue sky, the temples, the supple brushes of cypress, the sun beating in a withering hypnotic dazzle on the statues with curly stone hair and blunt sagacious noses.

This stare of landscape that so often freezes and sometimes softens is the *idée fixe* of *Prospero's Cell*. One sees it at work in the "Euclidean" patterns of the author's mind, in his search for history and mythology (Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as well as Homer is here invoked); in the calm blue evenings when water reflects whitely on the balcony; in fishing expeditions at night with carbide lamp and trident—a thrust and up comes a squid wheezing plaintively and squirting its ink over the laughing fisherman; in the web-like conversations that stretch from meal to meal; in promenades and trips to the mountains, the traditional shadow-show of Karaghiosis (a phallic Punch) and the dancers in the sunlight. Much delicacy and animation are imparted to these latter figures, yet one's impression after finishing the book is of something caught in translucencies and reflections of glass. Perhaps the curious smooth feel and the gritty shapes under the surface are all Mr. Durrell means to offer. Let me quote again—from his account of the olive:

> Throughout the spring months, through the gales of March and the hard sunspots of April, the tireless women are out with their soft wicker hampers gathering the fruit as it falls. In the other islands the fruit is beaten from the tree and the tree itself pruned; but in Corcyra this has been, for hundreds of years, considered harmful. Prolix in its freedom therefore the olive takes strange shapes; sometimes it will swell and burst open, ramifying its shoots until a whole clump of trees seems to grow out of the breast of the parent; in some places (there is one particular grove between Kouloura and Kassopi) the trees grow tall and slender, with bodies not rough, but of a marvellous platinum-grey, and branches aerial and fine of attitude. In the northern crags again the olive crouches like a boxer; its roots undermine roads; its skin is rough and wormy; and its pitiful exhausted April flowering is like an appeal for mercy against the conspiracy of rock and heat.

Sensitive description; but too consciously so? Some exasperation as well as pleasure accompanied my reading of *Prospero's Cell*; or rather three-quarters of the way through, for the vision sharpens towards the end, and one agrees that, despite mannerism, the island is there. Prospero's island—without Ariel. The book, by the way, has some charming drawings by an earlier visitor, Edward Lear.

G. W. STONIER

**Gods and Kings.** By LAJOS BIRO. *Allen and Unwin.* 6*s*.

These six new one-act plays illustrate effectively Mr. Biro's mental agility. They are short stories in dialogue, conversation-pieces rather than plays. A situation is sketched and the words used are, as it were, the caption under a cartoon or a pencil drawing. But each playlet is built neatly and effortlessly round a point which is never a platitude and yet never an absurdity, amusing and original without losing plausibility. The principal theme throughout is the relationship between men and women or some aspect of that relationship—six variations on the same theme. There is a new version of the old story of Aphrodite's infidelity to Hephæstus, with an original twist to it; an imaginary reconstruction of the occasion when Napoleon used the famous words "Dèshabillez vous," and suffered his first defeat; Elizabeth in the Tower before she became Queen of England; a satire on human society by means of a game of chess; a little Hungarian triangular melodrama. They are delightful trifles worth their 6*s*.: but not even wartime pressure and lack of staff are sufficient excuse for the publishers misspelling the author's name twice on the dust jacket.

# Week-end Competitions

## No. 826

**Set by Raymond Mortimer**

Prizes of six guineas are offered for the best English versions of the following lines. Competitors may take any liberty they think fit in order to produce an equivalent effect. Entries by December 4th.

Un corbeau devant moi croasse;
Une ombre offusque mes regards;
Deux belettes et deux renards
Traversent l'endroit où je passe;
Les pieds faillent à mon cheval,
Mon laquais tombe du haut mal;
J'entends craqueter le tonnerre;
Un esprit se présente à moi;
J'ois Charon qui m'appelle à soi;
Je vois le centre de la terre.

Ce ruisseau remonte en sa source;
Un boeuf gravit sur un clocher;
Le sang coule de ce rocher;
Un aspic s'acouple d'une ourse;
Sur le haut d'une vieille tour
Un serpent déchire un vautour;
Le feu brûle dedans la glace,
Le soleil est devenu noir;
Je vois la lune qui va choir;
Cet arbre est sorti de sa place.

## RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 823

**Set by D. Y. Mason**

Competitors are asked to write in typical B.B.C. style an extract from the script for a microphone interview accorded to one of the following:—Madame de Pompadour, Shakespeare, Nero, Nell Gwynn, Wordsworth, Dick Turpin, Queen Victoria, Dr. Johnson, Eve. (Limit 200 words.)

**Report by D. Y. Mason**

One is often tempted to believe that the B.B.C. has been born of a mating of the Children's Encyclopedia with the Stockport Hippodrome, and I was glad to see how many competitors succeeded in capturing in their work the peculiar qualities implying such a parentage. Dr. Johnson, as might be expected, proved the best subject and drew very good entries from

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R. J. P. Hewison, S. P. B. Mais, Muriel M. Malvern nd the faithful J. R. Till, who also sent in a Wordsorth and a Nell Gwynn. Noteworthy Nell Gwynns lso came from R. Chee, Lt. R. M. Lang and D. A. G., hough the fact that she was described as witty ppeared to have been somewhat overlooked. Eve as a fruitful source of inspiration for Joyce Johnson, Robert Upcott, S. A. Cooper and Geo. B. Duthie, nd I was particularly taken with E. R. M.'s idea that er meeting with the serpent should be her Most Beautiful Memory. B. A. O. Williams, L. G. Udall nd Leslie Johnson attempted Nero with some success, nd there was a good Dick Turpin from Douglas Hawson. I was surprised that Shakespeare and Queen Victoria were not more popular with competitors, but f those that tried them most did well, particularly Aristo, Allan M. Laing and Constance Sewell (who hould be congratulated on some neat versifying).

After much difficult consideration I recommend hat two guineas each be awarded to R. J. P. Hewison nd Aristo (the brilliant closing of the one and opening f the other are in themselves worthy of the disinction), and a guinea each to Allan M. Laing and Constance Sewell.

## IN TOWN TO-NIGHT

*Introduced by William Littleowl*

### Dr. JOHNSON

*Thursday, November*, 194– ; — *p.m.* ; *Home.*

*William Littleowl :* You weren't always a doctor, ere you?

*Dr. Johnson :* No, sir. The fame of my exertions nduced my Alma Mater—tardily though acceptably— o confer upon the man what indigence had denied he youth.

*William Littleowl :* I understand. And what do ou think of modern developments?

*Dr. Johnson :* As little as possible. The age seems ossessed of a *cacoethes sciendi :* man's genius outruns is discretion, his villainy both. I cannot but recall ope's line—

"Man never *is*, but always *to be*, blest"

hen comparing each discovery's sequelæ with the indy vaticinations heralding its inauguration.

*William Littleowl :* Doctor, you sound as if you'd wallowed a dictionary!

*Dr. Johnson :* Sir, I once emitted one. Yet your dmiration is strange. He is but ill-found for affairs hat wants words, though mere verbosity, lacking hought to sustain and style to ordinate, is, I allow, ut rags of speech fluttering on a crowscarer.

*William Littleowl :* Well, we've heard about your ublic-professional side. What about the personal ngle?

*Dr. Johnson :* Do not tease me, sir. You are worse than poor Boswell—though he at least was a Scotchman.

*William Littleowl :* I see ; well, anyway, our limit's up.

(*Fade-out to record of "In an Eighteenth Century Drawing-room."*)

R. J. P. Hewison

## EXCERPT FROM A B.B.C. INTERVIEW WITH QUEEN VICTORIA

*Queen Victoria :* Kindly tell our good people they may listen to us seated.

*B.B.C. :* Thank you, Madam. Would your Majesty care to give us first some impressions of the political scene? The recent General Election, for example.

*Queen Victoria :* The Queen can only say that, although Mr. Churchill on occasion reminds her painfully of Lord Palmerston, *she* would never have permitted an ungrateful country to treat Lord Beaconsfield in such a fashion.

*B.B.C. :* London must seem greatly changed.

*Queen Victoria :* The destruction is very shocking. It will be a source of universal rejoicing that Providence has spared the Prince Consort's Memorial.

*B.B.C. :* You doubtless notice a great change in social manners, Madam?

*Queen Victoria :* Manners? As they appear to have vanished altogether, we cannot even begin to notice them. But the national manifestations of courage under aerial bombardment gave us unbounded satisfaction.

*B.B.C. :* Your Majesty's views on employment, housing and education would be welcomed.

*Queen Victoria :* Full employment will not be achieved by suppressing private enterprise. It is useless to build houses if no domestic help is available. The present trend of education is *quite* unsuitable.

*B.B.C. :* Turning now to modern English literature . . .

*Queen Victoria :* We are still not amused.

Aristo

## SHAKESPEAR INTERVIEWED

*Announcer :* Incidentally, sir, how *do* you spell your name?

*Shakespear :* Marry, with ease. Two E's or three, as you like it.

*Announcer :* Aha! That's one of your plays, isn't it? Your favourite, I presume?

*Shakespear :* God mend your presumption and give you more wit withal. The play served to keep the pot a-boil.

*Announcer :* No doubt, Mr. Shakespear, you keep in touch with the new drama ; what do you think of our modern dramatists?

*Shakespear :* I know but one.

*Announcer :* Mr. Priestley, perhaps?

*Shakespear :* Nay, the name is Shaw.

*Announcer :* Oh, yes, Shaw, of course. And what do you think of Mr. Shaw?

*Shakespear* (dropping into blank verse) :—

O, urge me not to discourse on that man
Whose name is tediously upon the tongue
Of argute demagogues in these our shades,
Till God himself prevents his passing hence
Lest, being dead, his restless intellect
Pervert the saints and topsy-turvy turn
The very courts of Heaven.

*Announcer :* H'm! (*tactfully changing the subject*). By the way, sir, our womenfolk are much interested in your domestic life. Dare I ask, for example, what led to your leaving only your second-best bedstead to Mistress Anne, your wife?

*Shakespear :* Did I so? Haply it was to match her lying, wherein she ever came off second-best. . . .

Allan M. Laing

*Interviewer :* Are you, so to speak, a Baconian or a Stratfordian?

*Shakespeare :*

Wherefore o'erdrag foul ponds in moonless dark
For circumstance of slander, quarrels, debts?
My verse my steward is now I am dead.
My Lords of Derby, Oxford, Rutland lie
With Francis Bacon sealèd in the dust.

*Interviewer :* Exactly. Now about Hamlet ; what was the point of his indecision and feigned madness?

*Shakespeare :*

The pitchy vapours of extremest hate,
Ambiguous encumb'ring filial love,
Distract what's best to do with what's worse done.
Engend'ring——

*Interviewer :* So the critics and actors must make what they can of it? Would you agree, broadly speaking, that youth has a longer innings than in your day?

*Shakespeare :*

No summer's rose but with its season dies,
No sometime fair outstays her beauty's time ;
But where their perfume or their tincture lies
Embalmed eternal in their poet's rhyme.

*Interviewer :* So, in spite of beauty culture, you would still tell sweet-and-twenty "Youth's a stuff will not endure"?

*Shakespeare :*

When thus I see age halted by the lip
Whose time-experienced coral doth not fade ;
I think not thus do they th' elixir sip
Though winter's frost o'er golden heads be stayed.

Constance Sewell

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